Improving Quality of Reflecting on Performance

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Abstract

Process educators recognize the potential power of reflection for enhancing insights gained from the assessment of any performance. The Theory of Performance has been articulated, as have methods and tools for the assessment process. However, for assessment to make a difference in future performance, the performer must become skilled at reflection, which expands the insights gained from the assessment. This type of reflection contrasts both with the tradition of Western philosophical reflection, and with the practice of mindfulness, which is related to Eastern traditions. The process educator's approach to assessment and reflection is historically related to constructivist and socio-cultural perspectives in education. Two new tools are presented to augment the assessment of specific performances and to facilitate the increased quality of the reflection component required for performance growth. The first tool is a methodology for the process of reflecting on performance; the second tool is a holistic Rubric for Reflecting on Performance (Exhibit 1). Evidence for this work was gathered by classifying the quality of reflection found in a sample of journals written by counseling interns, written before these tools were developed. No significant differences in the quality of reflection could be identified, either due to increased intensity of assessment feedback during the journaling process, or as a result of students having more internship experience. These new tools have been designed in a generalized way to increase their potential for supporting improved quality of reflection in related performance contexts.

Reflection from Alternative Perspectives

Since ancient times, thoughtful individuals have reflected upon the nature of reality, the meaning of life, and how to live a productive and satisfying life. Two distinctive types of reflection will be discussed here to provide a contrast to our main focus, which is reflection about performance. The Western philosophical tradition and the tradition of practicing mindfulness both differ from the practice of reflecting on performance, because the former two perspectives are about questions of broader meaning and ways of existence. Western philosophers take the largest perspective, while practitioners of mindfulness, such as Zen Buddhists, emphasize immediate awareness as a source for centering one's sensory, emotional, and cognitive attention. Process educators are interested in all three types of reflection, but have a strong interest in reflecting on performance.

The Western tradition is well represented by Montaigne's Essays (Trans. by Screech, 1991), written in the 16th century. At the time when the Essays were written, they served as an important milestone, paving the way by demonstrating a new identity-oriented exploration of all matters human. Montaigne bridged ancient and medieval world views with the 14th century Renaissance, when he lived, by challenging himself to give a full accounting of his own experiences and insights. Similarly, a contemporary philosopher, Magee (1999), takes readers on a personal journey through the range of Western philosophies to explore their value for him, and for humans in general. He discusses how philosophy in contemporary times has moved into language and scientific issues that have guided the methods for creating and validating knowledge in all contexts and disciplines. The philosophical traditions in all cultures address issues of ultimate meaning through analysis and synthesis with the goal of producing principled insights.

Germer, Siegel, and Fulton (2005) present a second perspective on reflection by emphasizing "mindfulness," which is a focus on present experience as a special phenomenon that is one type of reflection practiced by Zen Buddhists as well as increasing numbers of mental health therapists. Germer et al. describe this approach as non-conceptual, present-centered, non-judgmental, intentional, observant, nonverbal, exploratory, and liberating. Mindfulness, especially when practiced to the point where it can be skillfully employed, is an ability to remain aware of present functioning, e.g., breathing, as a background for positive perceptions of self and reality. Achieving mindfulness allows one to quickly become aware of contrasting or disruptive mental processes such as ruminations and emotions that can entangle a person and lead to suffering. In this tradition, the goal of reflection is to pare away unneeded stimuli to achieve a state of peace and well-being.

A third perspective on reflection, which is closest to the philosophy of Process Education™, puts the emphasis on the improvement of performance through assessment and reflection. This approach has a more utilitarian purpose but is built on well-defined skill domains that are organized in hierarchies from basic to complex (Apple, Beyerlein, Leise, & Baehr, 2007). To become more proficient in any learning skill one must actively engage, assess, practice, and reflect on how performance growth has been achieved thus far. Some skills clearly

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support learners being open to practicing assessment and reflection to further their own growth. Some examples of skills that support reflection on performance are listed.

- Cognitive skills: "filtering" data gained by observation against performance criteria, exploring performance contexts that influence performance, building on prior knowledge, and benchmarking

- Social skills: being non-judgmental, maintaining a mindset that is in accord with the principles of assessment, fitting into productive environments, and responding to changes in community requirements

- Affective skills: making accurate self-observations, learning from failure as well as from success, seeking assessment, valuing achievements, managing dissonance arising from unexpected experiences, preparing, rehearsing, challenging one's self, and increasing one's self-efficacy

Unlike the approaches of the Western philosophical tradition or the Eastern tradition of mindfulness, the purpose of reflecting on performance is to support the growth processes required to become better at what one does. Learners begin by functioning in the lower levels of the skills hierarchies, but they can continually seek opportunities to assess and reflect on their performances in increasingly sophisticated ways that will lead to consistent and even transformational uses of their performance skills.

Factors that Influence Reflection on Performance

According to Elger's (2007) Theory of Performance, reflective practice is an important way to attend to one's progress in improving the quality of performance skills. Growth in such skills occurs by making good use of assessment information about a current level of performance, context conditions, past accomplishments, the value of the performance to one's identity, motivation to perform, and barriers or opportunities related to "fixed factors" such as genetic inheritance. Growth in performance must be correlated with growth in assessment and reflection skills because these are the main processes that facilitate conscious changes in an individual's sense of empowerment. Many scholars outside of Process Education have analyzed how assessment and reflection work to produce learner growth.

Brockbank and McGill (2007) describe *reflective learning* as a process whereby learning is transformed intentionally through challenges within social learning contexts that lead to growth of individuals and changes in environments. They argue, from a social constructivist perspective, that learners and educators must be engaged in reflective dialogue to achieve this transformation of learning to higher levels of quality and creativity. In their view, factors that make this type of reflection possible are dialogue, intention, process, modeling, and the notion of personal stance.

According to Brockbank and McGill, dialogue occurs when educators are engaged with learners about knowledge and problems in ways that allow them to explore the different ways that individuals create personal meaning. Intention and process are interacting factors: when people articulate their intentions, they must also clearly articulate their processes for achieving objectives. When individuals model the practice of reflective learning, e.g., by means of visual representations, or by demonstrating skills, this must lead to more than the imitation of specific performances such as the movements of a dance instructor. Modeling must lead students to learn how to improve their skills in seeing connections, patterns, or generalizations that can be made during the course of dialogue, and by observing the holistic performances of others with a clear understanding of their intentions. Personal stance, as presented by Brockbank and McGill, is similar to way-of-being in the Process Education knowledge table (Quarless, 2007). Engagement of learners requires that their subjective perspectives be taken into account as well as their ways of handling discipline knowledge and skills.

Personal stance, or way-of-being, also requires that educators must remain aware of the inequality of their role and authority compared to students, which makes the distinctions between evaluation and assessment critical for achieving reflective work with learners. Brockbank and McGill observe that practitioners often fail to be sufficiently aware of this differential in power, which sometimes takes the form of instructors espousing learning theories that are contrary to their aims, for example, recommending that students participate in service learning experiences, but doing nothing more than informing them that such learning opportunities exist. If neither learner nor educator is aware that this is happening, the educator is apt to assert his or her authority and negatively evaluate any student who is not prepared enough to "get it." Utschig and Apple (2009) discuss ways to increase openness to the practice of assessment, even if it is presented as evaluation, by establishing rules and by defining the intentions of both the assessor and assessee. Without conscious safeguards that are mutually created and assented to, feedback tends to be experienced as evaluative. When this happens, it may impede the growth in the accuracy of students' self-assessments of specific performances and limit their use of reflection in supporting transformative performance growth.

Relationship of Assessment and Reflection

How does reflection on performance differ from assessment of specific performances in supporting the growth of performance? A review of basic principles of assessment will help to make the distinction clear, clarifying the need for separate methodologies and holistic rubrics for these "connected" processes. An important assumption is that the quality of reflection cannot improve unless the quality of self-assessment moves to a critical level of quality and accuracy that will support self-efficacy, i.e., the continual and conscious improvement in performance expectations. Apple, Leise, Beyerlein, and Baehr (2007) present stages of learning development that can emerge from improved self-assessment and reflection on quality of performance. Assessment and reflection processes must be "in parallel" for growth to be rapid and transformative.

Before moving on to a more detailed discussion of assessment and reflection, it is important to discuss *metacognition*, a related process that incorporates elements of both self-assessment and reflection on performance. Metacognition is described by Livingston (1997) as higher-order thinking involving active control over cognitive skills. Examples include the planning of learning strategies, monitoring comprehension, and evaluating one's progress in learning knowledge. Process Education incorporates these and related skills from the cognitive domain (Davis, Beyerlein, Leise, & Apple, 2007) but makes a clear distinction between the processes of assessment and reflection. The Theory of Performance (Elger, 2007) clearly distinguishes the roles of assessment and reflection in performance growth.

Perspectives on the Assessment Process

Utschig and Apple (2009) present critical ideas for improving assessment. Among them is the importance of dispelling three common assumptions that restrict the quality of assessment and affect the reflective processing of performance evidence. These three assumptions are: (a) that to address the need for improvement implies a judgment that performance must have been poor; (b) that high quality performance implies that there is no need to improve future performance; and (c) that the person receiving assessment feedback will know how to use it. To facilitate the growth of a performer, each of these must be addressed by the performer, not the external assessor. The assessor can be an important resource by offering guidance about assessment practice, serving as a mentor in the relationship (Leise, 2007). Scholars external to Process Education have much to offer that can extend or elaborate what Process Educators already understand.

Swaffield (2007) identifies three types of assessment that generally correspond to changes in educational theory during the past half century. The first is referred to as "assessing learning of what was taught." She describes this as the traditional "folk psychology" approach to knowledge that includes assumptions that memorization is the basic learning process to be evaluated with exams. However, the results of examination scores give students little insight about how to improve their learning. In personal life, the parallel mechanism for learning to adapt to life is behavioral conditioning. Often, though behavioral conditioning processes have substantive influences on a person, they can occur without the person's conscious awareness of how, when, and why they have occurred. Without conscious awareness, or an accurate understanding of these hidden processes, reflection cannot play an important role or may lead to errors.

The second type of assessment is referred to as "assessing learning as individual sense-making." Swaffield associates this philosophy of assessment with the cognitive-constructivist educational perspective which puts emphasis on the variation of individuals in how they learn and what meaning they gain from learning. Encouraged by this philosophy, a new emphasis on constructing learning models applied in problem solving in the classroom has supported improvements in curriculum beyond memorization, utilizing many of the principles that are central to Process Education.

The third model of assessment is "assessing the building of knowledge as part of doing things with others," which Swaffield associates with the socio-cultural theories of John Dewey, William James, and Lev Vygotsky. All focus on natural communities of practice within societies that facilitate developmental processes. She considers this third model of assessment to be the one that will improve education and support reflective practices by both learners and educators.

These distinctions between assessment practices, as articulated by Swaffield, lead to important insights about how and why reflection interacts with and enhances assessment. The first, memorization, stimulates little reflection because feedback is mostly evaluative and lacking in individual detail. The second (cognitive-constructivist) and the third (socio-cultural) have strong implications for the role of reflection on assessment of performance because both emphasize the subjective, personal perspective about knowledge; how it is perceived; and how individuals use it.

The socio-cultural philosophy of education emphasizes that the most valuable assessment and reflection is likely to occur in contexts in which outcomes are being pursued

with others and which have real-world results. One example of such a context that is familiar to the author is that of the graduate intern in a counseling program, who must learn to assess his or her professional skills in sensitive counseling contexts, and who must also grow in the integration of discipline knowledge along with practice skills. The author's work with such interns led to the conceptualization of the Reflection on Performance Rubric presented in this paper.

Reflection Skills of Counseling Interns

Mental health counselors work with vulnerable clients in varied contexts such as interpersonal interviews, group psycho-education and therapy, homes, residential treatment settings, substance abuse treatment agencies, shelters for the homeless or domestic violence victims, mental hospitals, nursing homes, hospices, prisons, and varied community settings in which their skills can be applied to facilitate the recovery or positive enhancement of emotional and coping skills of many kinds of client populations. The socio-cultural philosophy of education described by Swaffield (2007) matches especially well with counseling education due to the requirement that counselors must work within a service field with many complementary professionals to facilitate change with highly diverse clients. Swaffield considers the cognitive-constructivist philosophy to be less comprehensive, but it is quite important within Process Education, and for building the counselor competencies related to understanding and assessing clients' world views. The problem solving in counseling requires mutual exploration of a client's thoughts, emotions, behaviors, and culture as a basis for planning change; all of this is consistent with the previously presented reflection model of Brockbank and McGill (2007).

Interns are beginning the journey of growth to become effective counseling professionals. A typical pattern in the professional development of interns begins in their graduate courses, which increase their knowledge of professional settings and provide opportunities for receiving faculty guidance in their identities as mental health professionals. An extensive body of literature on counselor supervision has identified a typical qualitative pattern of growth of interns through three significant phases of clinical performance.

An initial phase in an intern's experiences, as described by Stotenberg and O'Neil (1997), includes a self-centered perspective which interns experience as anxiety about their own performance; this anxiety is especially high when interns are uncertain about how to proceed with clients. Anxiety and uncertainty reduces an intern's ability to attend to the process and the client. A second

phase is typified by an increased focus on counseling techniques that have been learned from courses and previous experiences in the field. The challenge during the second phase is to grow in competencies related to maintaining rapport with clients while also implementing techniques likely to be beneficial.

A third phase occurs when the intern can adeptly integrate interpersonal communication skills with counseling strategies and knowledge so that his or her attention resources become increasingly client-centered. This is consistent with the principle of unconditional positive regard and similar professional competency perspectives promoted by Rogers (1951). Typically, interns show gradual transformation of their professional skills until it becomes natural to pay attention to the client while also increasing their self-efficacy (sense of competence) related to the skills needed to provide quality services. The developmental influence of supervised internship experiences provides an ideal context both for improving the intern's self-assessment skills and for transforming the quality of the intern's performance through reflection.

Knowledge Table for the Counseling Profession

A prerequisite for understanding the frame of reference for any measure is the development of a knowledge table for the discipline. Table 1 includes a sample of major concepts, processes, tools, contexts, and ways-of-being for the counseling profession. Each item could be elaborated extensively, but the examples will serve present purposes. Selected items are highlighted to indicate their special significance for reflection on performance.

The Reflective Journal Assignment

A typical assignment for interns, and others who are in service learning contexts, is to write journals about their experiences. After assessing and responding to many such journals over several years, the author gained a sense of pattern in these writings and became interested in ways to improve the structure, content, and insight features of these two-to-three-page documents. For example, initial journals often include diary-like entries about daily tasks and meetings but no focused insights. The challenge of raising the quality of these journal entries resulted in the identification of the main factors that are involved in the kind of effective journaling that promotes high quality reflection and growth. This resulted in development of the Reflection on Performance Rubric (Exhibit 1). To establish a baseline for what represented most interns' current quality of reflection on their own performance, the author rated a sample of 133 journals written before the rubric was developed.

Table 1

Concepts	
Theories of counseling	
Techniques of counseling	
Levels of counselor skills	
Psychopathology theory	
Processes	
Interviewing	Supervising
Observing	Referring
Empathizing	Terminating
Assessing	**Reflecting on performance**
Diagnosing	
Planning	**Reflecting on personal development**
Goal setting	
Facilitating treatment sessions	**Growing professionally**
Tools	
Supervisor	Agency forms
Diagnostic manuals	Record systems
Psychological scales	**Professional literature**
Therapy manuals	**Self-Assessment rubrics**
Contexts	
Offices	**Inpatient hospitals**
Clinical meetings	**Community referral sites**
Supervision sessions	
Residential programs	Graduate schools
Outpatient programs	Licensure regulations
Way of Being	
Empathic	Humanistic
Person-oriented	**Growth-oriented**
Community-oriented	**Assessment mindset**

Pilot Rating Data

To assess the "face" validity (apparent reasonableness) of the qualitative levels of the rubric, a sample of intern journals was reviewed using the rubric. It was hypothesized that the average ratings would be consistent with two parameters. First, journals submitted on a weekly basis, which thereby received "spaced" feedback, should have a higher quality level than journals submitted all at once at the end of the term. Second, journals from the second half of an internship should be higher in quality, due to increased experience under clinical supervision, than those at the beginning. However, the results for the sample set of 133 journals indicated no apparent differences due to spacing of feedback (weekly submission versus batch submission at the end of the term) or for time phase within the internship (first versus second half). The average qualitative level of reflection in all journals was below Level 2 (Descriptive Reflector). Of the 133, only 10 qualified, marginally, for a rating at Level 3 (Applied Reflector). This clearly indicated the need for greater attention to the quality of journal writings.

Based on these pilot data, the following steps were taken to facilitate improvement of reflection in journals. First, the objectives for the journal assignment were clarified and better instructions were provided. Criteria for successful journal entries are that each is expected to have a title; the presentation of an experience or issue from internship work or supervision; at least one professional citation to provide background or alternative recommendations; an analysis of the experience, based on new knowledge and supervision; and a concluding insight that is transferable, or can be generalized, to future professional needs.

Once the intent and structure of the journal task was clarified, the need for a well-constructed methodology and a holistic rubric became apparent because quality of journals continued to vary substantially despite initial improvements in instructions and assessment.

A Methodology for Reflecting on Performance

To ensure growth with a process it is essential to have an effective methodology (Leise & Beyerlein, 2007; Smith & Apple, 2007a). The Theory of Performance (Elger, 2007) specifies six components that holistically influence the current performance of any skill. These include context, level of knowledge, level of skill, level of identity, personal factors, and fixed factors. In addition, three axioms or conditions are significant: having a performer's mindset, immersion in an enriching environment, and engagement in reflective practice. Various assessment tools are available but the SII technique (Wasserman & Beyerlein, 2007) is recommended.

Phase 1 of the methodology for improving quality of reflection is the assessment of performance; it is a prerequisite of reflection on performance according to the Theory of Performance (Elger, 2007).

Phase 1: Observation and Assessment Phase:

1. Identify a skill of personal or professional importance

2. Set criteria and standards appropriate for self-assessment of the performance described

3. Assess the quality of the performance by applying the SII technique or an alternative method

Exhibit 1: Reflecting on Performance Rubric

5. **Integrated Reflector** *(Reflects on transformative aspects of performance factors)*

   a. Immediately perceives multiple aspects of behavior in any situation that indicate potential performance growth opportunities for self and others

   b. Assesses multiple performance issues against multiple types of performance standards

   c. Uses constructs from published theory and research to enlarge the scope of performance growth potential within the context of a system

   d. Analyses motivation and identity growth of performers in human organizations or systems from a leadership perspective

   e. Articulates insights about individual, group, and systems performance that can benefit the overall quality of an organization or system

4. **Mindful Reflector:** *(Uses reflection for purposes beyond individual skills growth)*

   a. Reliably captures the essence from an observed performance experience that should be the focus of assessment and analysis for growth

   b. Guides learners or mentees to assess growth in the transfer of skills needed to become broadly and deeply competent

   c. Designs learning activities that assist learners, mentees, or supervisees to flexibly gain applied insights from any type of relevant literature

   d. Uses a wide variety of critical thinking skills in focused ways to illustrate the various perspectives and insights available from the analysis of any performance

   e. Articulates insights that support the transfer of multiple skills to new or more challenging contexts

3. **Applied Reflector** *(Uses reflection effectively for the growth of one's own skills)*

   a. Consistently perceives and identifies relevant observations about actual performance experiences

   b. Self-assesses based on accurate observations focusing on differences in quality of current versus previous performance

   c. Selectively incorporates knowledge from scholarly literature to gain insights about dynamic factors such as how to improve learning conditions, how to benefit from mentoring, and how to apply key insights of experts

   d. Analyzes alternative assumptions or conceptualizations of what influences the quality of a performance

   e. Combines the current quality of performance with relevant knowledge about the area of competency to articulate insights about how to continue the growth of a skill

2. **Descriptive Reflector:** *(Reflection at a beginning level; moving toward growth)*

   a. Accurately observes/perceives relevant behavior and conditions related to one skill

   b. Imprecisely self-assesses because the focus is on abstractly-defined aspects of performance rather than on directly observed performance

   c. Relies directly on published knowledge about relatively fixed personal factors, e.g., personality or school achievement, to provide a basis for understanding observations about performance

   d. Evaluates performance using standards based on the expectations of others

   e. Articulates insights in terms of what a performer should do to meet the expectations of evaluators or other assumed standards

1. **Unfocused Observer:** *(Captured by present assumptions and emotions)*

   a. Demonstrates inconsistent focus of perceptions and observations within a situation, even with guidance

   b. Uses positive, but "evaluative," descriptors such as "good" or "well done" to characterize performance in a situation

   c. Relies on personal opinion or impressions for validation of assumptions about current performance

   d. Accepts current assumptions without question; may be surprised at alternative appraisals from others

   e. Describes personal reactions about performance as insights

[Factors: (a) Quality of Observations, (b) Quality of Self-Assessment, (c) Quality of Background Knowledge, (d) Quality of Critical Analysis, and (e) Articulation of Insights]

Phase 2: Reflection Phase

4. Naturalistically, i.e., based on available observations and information, describe the performance in terms of behavior and context

5. Analyze the relative importance of the six factors of performance theory for this specific performance experience

6. Document, using professional or scholarly literature, criteria and ideal standards for this type of performance

7. Interpret the assessment results (from Phase 1) in terms of: a) personal mindset; b) influences of the social and physical environment; and c) quality of reflective practice used to gain insights about the performance issues

8. Connect the current performance competency level with expectations or requirements in the field or discipline

9. Holistically assess, using the Reflection on Performance Rubric (Exhibit 1), the quality of journaling from multiple samples, e.g., three or more, to identify growth trends

10. Prepare a title, reader orientation (introduction), and other sections of a brief reflection journal

Design of a Holistic Rubric for Reflection on Performance

The analysis behind the creation of the holistic Reflection on Performance Rubric will be presented to illustrate the methodology (Smith & Apple, 2007a) for creating such a measure as well as to present the details of the measure itself. Holistic rubrics are designed to guide educators in the assessment of qualitative differences in complex skills, e.g., writing in a discipline (Burke & Nancarrow, 2007). It is essential to develop well-written, challenging assignments/activities and to apply corresponding analytic rubrics if scoring for either assessment or evaluation is needed or intended. Leise and El-Sayed (2009) present an example of an analytic rubric for scoring research proposals. It is not appropriate to use holistic rubrics to evaluate specific performances because the intent is to assess growth or progress based on multiple samples of the target skill.

Selected steps in Process Education's methodology for creating methodologies (Smith & Apple, 2007a) were used to develop the present holistic rubric, entitled Reflection on Performance Rubric (Exhibit 1). The following sections provide descriptions of details involved in creating this rubric.

1. Description of Reflection on Performance as a Process:

Reflection is essential for the growth of any performance skill. When examining the observations and assessments related to any type of performance, it is essential to inquire about their meaning in an open, thoughtful, and focused way. This will increase the probability that the quality of that performance will become more stable due to the conscious awareness of what makes the performance as good as it is. Improvement in reflection skills will support further levels of competency as well as changes in transfer and generalization. Reflection involves intuition and other subjective perspectives but these must be integrated into a logical and empirical analysis of how performance quality can be advanced. Increased experience with reflection can facilitate the generalization of growth of many skills related to a personal or professional context. Effective mentoring and self-assessment tools can be used in a mindful and emotionally stable manner to support ongoing improvement in the quality of insights about how to increase growth of specific performances and to support generalization across skill areas.

2. Ten Paired Statements that Describe Reflection:

Ten important quality issues emerged from literature review and brainstorming; these were further summarized after pairing those closest to each other in meaning and then writing five statements that resulted in the main factors: observation skills, self-assessment skills, connections with discipline knowledge, critical analysis of issues, and articulation of conclusions or insights. For reader insight, these are listed with the pairs judged to be most closely associated with each other within the initial ten statements. The internship context influenced the statements and the criteria in recognizable ways but the goal was to produce a "universal" rubric.

Accuracy of Perceptions

1. There is consciousness or "mindfulness" about what specific aspects of a directly observed situation will require fuller attention and analysis in order to enhance performance growth

2. Perceptions of observed phenomena are assessed for accuracy, relevance, and personal bias (e.g., counter-transference for counselors) by means of self-assessment and discussion with a supervisor or mentor

Quality of Self-Assessment

1. Assessment of the performance of a skill of interest in the situation produces useful insights for future growth

2. The history of assessment demonstrates mindfulness about continual improvement of "core" skills

Quality of Background Knowledge

1. Selected theories, models, techniques, or evidence from published scholarship and research are used to put the perceptions and problem into a recognizable knowledge framework

2. Established standards for determining quality of performance are applied to assess performance in the observed context

Quality of Critical Analysis

1. Critical thinking is done using one or more consciously selected analysis techniques to evaluate divergent hypotheses in order to draw conclusions about the current question

2. Efficiency of analysis is improved by bringing an appropriately skeptical attitude to identify assumptions in order to achieve valid consistency in the interpretation of the situation or issue

Articulation of Insights

1. Articulation of insights is based on the critical analysis of alternative ways of formulating the "problem" assumed to be present in the situation

2. Insights are articulated in ways that connect specific experiences to performance growth

3. **Five summary statements (one for each pair to clarify "factors")**

   a. **Accuracy of Perceptions:** Observation of behaviors and reactions within a situation are accurate and complete

   b. **Quality of Self-Assessment:** Assessment results produce growth in overall performance

   c. **Quality of Background Knowledge:** Insights about performance are enhanced by the incorporation of present knowledge from published scholarship

   d. **Quality of Critical Analysis:** To derive a likely interpretation, questions relevant to the situation are analyzed skeptically yet openly

   e. **Articulation of Insights:** Insights communicate clearly how learning from assessment and analysis of performance issues can be applied to future performance

4. **Quality Levels of Reflection**

   a. **Unfocused Observer** (disorganized way of observing/assessing/analyzing)

   b. **Descriptive Reflector** (careful way of observing/assessing a performance)

   c. **Applied Reflector** (articulating transferable insights for a performance)

   d. **Mindful Reflector** (articulating transferable insights for a set of related performance skills)

   e. **Integrated Reflector** (articulating insights for generalized growth of any performance skill)

Validity Concerns for Holistic Rating Measures

Educators use many qualitative measurement tools in their daily work with students. However, concerns about reliability and validity of these measures have influenced national educational standards to be based on standardized achievement measures, which are by definition evaluation-oriented. Despite the limitations of published ability tests for assessment purposes, Sackett, Borneman, and Connelly (2008) present evidence of their validity and fairness when properly used for evaluative purposes.

Swaffield (2007) expresses concern about validity when educator-designed measures are used for assessment, and lists three basic validity problems:

1. Inadequate reliability—variations in assessment accuracy or consistency due to random or unexamined factors

2. Construct underrepresentation—missing factors or content that should be part of the assessment

3. Construct-irrelevant variance—measuring content or factors beyond those intended by the assessment

Swaffield then asks whether there is evidence that teachers can make valid assessments. She summarizes the arguments as follows:

1. Teachers observe a fuller range of performance, behavior, and outcomes; tests often restrict content because some things can be more reliably measured, e.g., memory of facts

2. Teacher assessment builds a picture of the overall achievement across activities and goals and with reduced anxiety compared to formal tests

3. Teacher assessments have value if criteria are clearly established (e.g., Harlan, 2005)

4. Useful assessments must be holistic, not merely checklists

5. Transparency of assessments for all stakeholders will increase understanding of the criteria used and their fairness

Swaffield's conclusion is that educators' uses of assessment data typically are reliable and valid enough to serve the purpose of improving learning and growth. It is important for process educators to do research on the reliability and validity of their measurements and to understand how these are interpreted and communicated to learners. The interactions with learners must occur using assessment and reflection as key processes that are well-instituted in a quality learning environment (Smith & Apple, 2007b). The methodology and holistic rubric presented here for reflecting on performance meet the standards suggested by Swaffield. As mentioned, some pilot data were analyzed as an initial test of the rubric.

Conclusion

Unlike forms of reflection that are philosophical or "mindful," reflection on performance is a process that helps a person make better use of assessment feedback. Performance theory includes and requires reflection about assessment as a central process for the improvement of any performance. The Methodology for Reflecting on Performance and the holistic Reflection on Performance Rubric were developed in response to the author's experiences with counseling interns; the criteria were generalized to make them relevant to multiple contexts and learners. The goal in this paper is to illustrate, using author experiences with counseling interns, the usefulness of the integration of knowledge tables, methodologies, and holistic rubrics for a more systematic perspective on performance issues. Initial evidence indicates that interns who do not receive specific guidance and assessment do not improve the quality of their reflection journaling. Thus, both the educator and the learner need these tools to support growth in reflection on performance.

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