Making the Most of Learning Outside the Classroom

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Experiential Learning

Dewey/Kolb – experiential learning is the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience.

NOT JUST INTEGRATION BUT CREATION OF NEW KNOWLEDGE
Mezirow: Transformative learning

The process by which we transform our taken-for-granted frames of reference to make them more inclusive, discriminating, open.

We become more emotionally capable of change and reflection enabling us to generate beliefs and opinions that will prove more true or justified to guide our future actions.
Schön

- Reflection IN action

- Reflection ON action
Argyris: Double Loop Learning

Single – Loop Learning
The most common style of learning is just problem solving – improving the system as it exists.

Assumptions
Why We Do What We Do

Strategies and Techniques
What We Do

Results
What We Get

Double – Loop Learning
More than just fixing the problem, this style of learning questions the underlying assumptions, values and beliefs behind what we do.

We have a strong tendency to **REJECT** ideas that fail to fit our preconceptions, labeling those as unworthy of consideration, nonsense, irrelevant or mistaken.

Example: student teaching
Reflection – What it is and is NOT

- Reflection is NOT
  - Journaling
  - Describing what happened
  - “An ‘add-on-extra’ to academic learning, but an essential component of quality learning and the representation of that learning”

- Reflection is a deeper approach to learning
  - Collectively thinking about the process and information
  - Relating new material to previous knowledge
  - Continuous learning
  - Transforming your mental models
Reflective Cycle

Describe
What happened?
What were you thinking and feeling?

Evaluate
What was good/bad about the experience?

Action Plan
If it arose again, what would you do?

Alternatives
What else could you have done?

Analysis
What sense can you make of this? What were your biases, assumptions? Are they true?

(Gibbs, 1988)
A Few Reflection Models

1. Gibbs Cycle
2. Brookfield’s Critical Incidence
3. Barr’s questions for Allied Health
4. Raelin’s Structure for Structured Reflection
5. Cohen, McDaniels & Qualters AIR Model of Ethical Reflection
Take Home Points

- Goal of out of classroom experiences is transformative learning

- REFLECTION is key to this transformation

- Can take many forms but:
  - Should involve raising and examining of assumptions and beliefs
  - Done in a safe environment
  - Done in concert with others (collective)
Why Ethical Inquiry?

- Student Exposure
- Student lack resources/knowledge
- Disempowerment
- Desensitized and Distracted
- Not addressed in experiential sites
What do we mean by ethical inquiry?

“The AIR model empowers students’:

- **Awareness**
  - sensitivity and acknowledgement of ethical concerns/issues

- **Investigation**
  - research, analysis, decision-making

- **Response**
  - implementing decisions, alternatives
Figure 1
AIR MODEL of Reflective ETHICAL INQUIRY

***Begin

NEW AWARENESS

Reflective RESPONDING

IDENTIFY/TEST ASSUMPTIONS

Reflective INVESTIGATION

CARE COMPASSION APPRECIATION

impact

consequences

stakeholders

safe environment

EXPERIENCE
Who is impacted by this dilemma? Who are the stakeholders in this situation?

What do you see as the specific underlying ethical issues?
  - Probe for specificity

What assumptions/beliefs were underlying your reaction to, and feeling about, the situation?

How will you take action: investigate these assumptions and beliefs?
Experiential Ethics Inquiry Course

Empower Students to:

1. shift from a “reactive, disconnected” mode TO “reflective, connected” mode

2. investigate & research ethical concerns they experience in practice

3. entertain options for responding more wisely and creatively to real-life ethical concerns
Qualitative Assessment

Increased confidence and comfort in responding

“I know not to be afraid. If I’m uncomfortable, then there’s a problem that needs to be dealt with. I have realized that it’s not necessary to ignore ethical concerns but question them and straighten them out.”
Take Home Points

- Ethical inquiry is a vital tool for managing ethical issues in experiential education

- AIR model is an effective/efficient way to guide ethical decision making

- Outcome of ethical inquiry is empowerment and creativity