

Activity 6 Reflective Practice



Reflective practice is an active process of reviewing experiences in order to inform and improve future practice. It involves conscious and thoughtful deliberation of past events, assessment of the actions and engagement with others that transpired in these events, and contemplation of how to improve future practice in light of this assessment.

Context

Scholars were encouraged to regularly engage in reflective practice. Many of them reported that it was something they did automatically while others indicated that it was only in dialogue with others that they employed this tool.

Sessions on reflective journaling, as a means of formally engaging in reflective practice, were presented at the leadership retreats. It was suggested that reflective journal musings could be used as a springboard for discussions in mentoring and coaching relationships and could also be shared with other scholars in meetings or via email.

While scholars were not compelled to engage in reflective journaling, it was suggested as a sound strategy for their ongoing leadership capacity development. However, interviews with scholars indicated that very few of them regularly engaged in reflective journaling.

Despite the fact that very few of the scholars engaged in reflective journaling all of them reported engaging in reflective practices. Most commonly this was an outcome of conversations or due to a requirement for them to provide a formal or informal faculty based-project update or report.

Many of the project activities evoked reflective practice including the institutional and cross-institutional meetings, the mentoring and coaching meetings, the leadership retreat and workshop, the roundtable event and preparation of progress reports and roundtable posters.

Success Factors of this Activity as Reported by Scholars

Keeping a record of events and activities that transpired throughout the implementation of the faculty-based project.

“I’ve been keeping constant records of everything that’s been done and writing up as soon as I’ve completed activities.” (2008 Scholar)

Developing conference or journal articles, creating the project poster and preparing presentations were all identified by scholars as effective springboards for reflective practice.

“I have also been writing up a manuscript for a paper I am going to be delivering at a conference next year, this has also been a useful means of reflection.” (2008 Scholar)

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Key Challenges Experienced by Scholars

Finding the time to engage in formal reflective practices such as reflective journaling.

“Reflective journaling is a challenge because it’s just not part of your day to day thinking, and operation.” (2007 Scholar).

Review and Improvement

While the value of reflective journaling was unquestionable the impetus for it was not compelling as such a suggestion was made that an obligatory requirement to engage in reflective journaling might ensure scholars engage in this worthwhile activity.

“I think it would be a good thing to make the journal a more formal requirement of the project but in saying that I think there would be a lot of flack from scholars if you did make it a more formal component of the project.” (2007 Scholar)

Explore the use of an online tool for reflective journaling.

Demonstrate at the retreat different methods and strategies for reflective practice.

Links and Resources

Resources and materials to support reflective practice are presented on the GREEN website:

www.uow.edu.au/cedir/DistributiveLeadership