



Scholarly Excellence in the Age of Compliance

Roundtable World Café Panel 4: Developing students as reflective practitioners

Associate Professor Melanie Williams
William Angliss Institute

Reflection and VET: contradiction in terms?

- Training packages: instrumental, atomised, highly contextualised knowledge & skills required for specific job functions
- Focus on knowledge, skills & their application
- Even though employers call for soft skills, training packages don't spend capital on reflection and critical self-reflection

WAI strategic directions

- Aspire to become a University of Specialisation – will embrace both VE & HE sectors
- Looking for mechanisms that can unify the Institute under the banner of UoS
- Seeking to enhance the quality of learning & teaching
- Framework for Scholarly Practice that articulates how scholarship is understood & practised at WAI – HE & VE, staff & students

Features of scholarly work	In your investigation, do you...
Clear goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Explain the project clearly and identify important questions in the field? ➤ Define a clear purpose and achievable objectives for your work?
Adequate preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Locate your work in the context of current and emerging industry/ disciplinary/ pedagogical knowledge/ practice/ research in your field? ➤ Bring together the resources, information and skills necessary to move the work forward?
Appropriate methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Use a systematic and planned approach that is appropriate to the goals? ➤ Apply the methods selected in a rigorous and ethical manner that is responsive to changing circumstances? ➤ Maintain records of process and outcomes?
Collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Engage with a range of stakeholders? ➤ Draw on specialist expertise and advice? ➤ Engage in shared reflection?

Features of scholarly work	In your investigation, do you...
Critical analysis and synthesis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Challenge existing knowledge, assumptions and ideas? ➤ Bring together your findings to draw conclusions within a theoretical framework? ➤ Support your claims with evidence and sound argument?
Significant results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Contribute new knowledge, the new application of knowledge or improved practice in the field? ➤ Offer students the opportunity for innovative engagement with their future profession? ➤ Open up additional areas for further exploration?
Making knowledge public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Open your practice to peer review and stakeholder feedback? ➤ Communicate your message clearly through teaching, presentation, publication or exhibition?
Reflective critique	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Identify the influences and assumptions that you bring to the work? ➤ Reflect on both the processes and outcomes? ➤ Bring a breadth of evidence to the review of your work? ➤ Use critical evaluation to improve the quality of future work?

Capstone model

- From 2018 no longer grading individual assessments in individual units of competency – one graded capstone assessment per course from Cert III to Adv Dip (students who want a grade opt in)
- Capstone sits outside the training package qualifications
- Pulling HE graduate attributes into VE as part of the harmonisation of the sectors
- Graduate attributes include scholarly skills
- Every capstone assessment has a scholarly component, informed by the WAI Framework for Scholarly Practice & graduate attributes

Scholarly component

- Particular focus on reflective critique
- Most capstones incorporate a learning journal (not assessed)
- At the end of semester/course students analyse & synthesise the themes from their journals into a reflective commentary, which is assessed (Brookfield, 1995)
- Monthly online questions in Moodle guide reflection on learning throughout course
- Questions directed towards developing insight into own learning but also range across graduate attributes
- Commentary also guided by questions
- Scholarly skills assessed across capstone task + reflective commentary. Rubric based on scholarly framework.

Learning journal

- What do you want to get out of this course? (After your first response, you only need to answer this question if your goals change.)
- What progress have you made towards achieving your goals?
- What learning activity, idea or emotional response took you by surprise this month - what really made you stop and think? Why was it significant?
- How did you contribute when working with others this month - what role/s did you take on?
- What ethical or social issues (if any) came up in the course of your studies this month (e.g. environmental sustainability, ethical business practices, sourcing ethically produced products etc.)? Where do you stand on these issues?

Learning journal (contd.)

- What do you feel proudest about regarding your leaning this month?
- What challenges or problems (if any) have you faced in your learning this month and how did you overcome them?
- What extra skills, information or resources (if any) do you need to develop or access to move your learning forward (e.g. getting assistance from a learning advisor or librarian, gathering further information about a particular topic)?
- Of everything you did as a learner this month, what would you do differently if you had to do it again?

Reflective commentary

- What were your goals for the course and to what extent did you achieve them?
- What readings, ideas, theories or activities that you studied had the biggest impact on your work? What made these so meaningful?
- Describe one or two examples of the kinds of problems or challenges you faced in your learning and how you dealt with them. How effective were the solutions you found?
- Give one or two examples of ethical or social issues that came up in the course. How will you take these questions into consideration in your future work?

Reflective commentary (contd.)

- What contributions did you make to the small group activities you were involved in? What role or roles did you tend to play?
- What was your most significant achievement, and why is it so significant?
- What do you feel are your strengths as a learner? Your weaknesses?
- Of everything you did as a learner in this course, what would you do differently if you had to do it again?

Potential issues/questions for discussion

- Literacy levels at Cert III – is it OK to keep a video diary?
- Student engagement – how to get students to see the value in reflecting on their learning and their practice and taking it seriously?
- Modelling reflective practice – how to get teachers to engage in reflective practice themselves and model this for students?

Reference

Brookfield, S. (1995). *Becoming a critically reflective teacher*: San Francisco : Jossey-Bass, c1995.