

Enhancing deep learning

THE BENEFITS OF REFLECTION THROUGH COLLABORATIVE WORK

Emiko Yoshida, Social Development Studies
Keely Cook, English Language Institute
Kyle Scholz, Centre for Teaching Excellence
University of Waterloo

OUTLINE

The research study

Theoretical framework

- Experiential Educational
- Intercultural learning and cross-cultural communication through interaction for learning

Student experiences and reflection

Lessons learnt

Next steps and take-aways

THE RESEARCH STUDY

Research questions:

- To what extent do social interactions enhance deeper learning for students?
- How does a collaborative assignment provide students with unique language learning opportunities in a cross-cultural context?

Students from the Bridge to Academic Success (BASE) program paired up with students from Cross-Cultural Psychology (PSYCH 349R) to engage in intercultural learning and cross-cultural communication

THE RESEARCH STUDY:

Assignment guidelines

PSYCH 349R students:

- 25% of the course grade
- Meet with partner five times throughout semester
- Have a conversation with them or interview them
- Write five reflections on these conversations and apply theory from course to interactions
- **Students paired up based on shared interests → common ground**

BASE students:

- 10% of the course grade broken down into the following components weighted at 2.5% each:
 - Project-in-process: Reflective Audio file
 - Summative Reflective Audio file
 - Meeting Log
 - Peer Feedback

The assignment was facilitated through use of ePortfolio tool

- Allows students to reflect on their intercultural experiences, as well as share and comment on one another's work in a safe, secure environment

Introduction

Introduction

ePortfolio

Entry 1

ePortfolio

Entry 2

ePortfolio

Entry 3

ePortfolio

Entry 4

ePortfolio


Entry 5

Cultural

Artifacts

Introduction (example)

Last modified on Feb 1, 2015 12:24 PM

My name is  This picture represents me because it gives a rough idea of my personal cultural background. My family comes from Taiwan and I was the first person in the family to be born in Canada. Due to this situation, my cultural background is a multidimensional mix of Taiwanese culture as well as Canadian culture. I spent a considerable amount of time in both countries and have influence from both.

Review Item

Add Comment

Name

Date Posted

Apr 6, 2015 3:26 PM

You have introduced that your parents are very strict to your study, and cultivating your hobbies. You are very good at instruments, and also in working out.

Apr 6, 2015 3:25 PM

You have gave some interesting opinions about the cutting prices when purchase stuffs in Asian countries and Western countries. In Asian countries, it is common for purchaser to cut prices, but in western countries, it is not allowed for people to cut prices.

THE RESEARCH STUDY:

Intended learning objectives

PSYCH students

- Reflect on what you have learned and present critical thinking
- Connect psychological theories and research to everyday life
- Examine and present your own cultures from various perspectives
- Present your ideas, examples or artifacts in a professional manner
- Record your progress and improvement as you explore new cultural knowledge

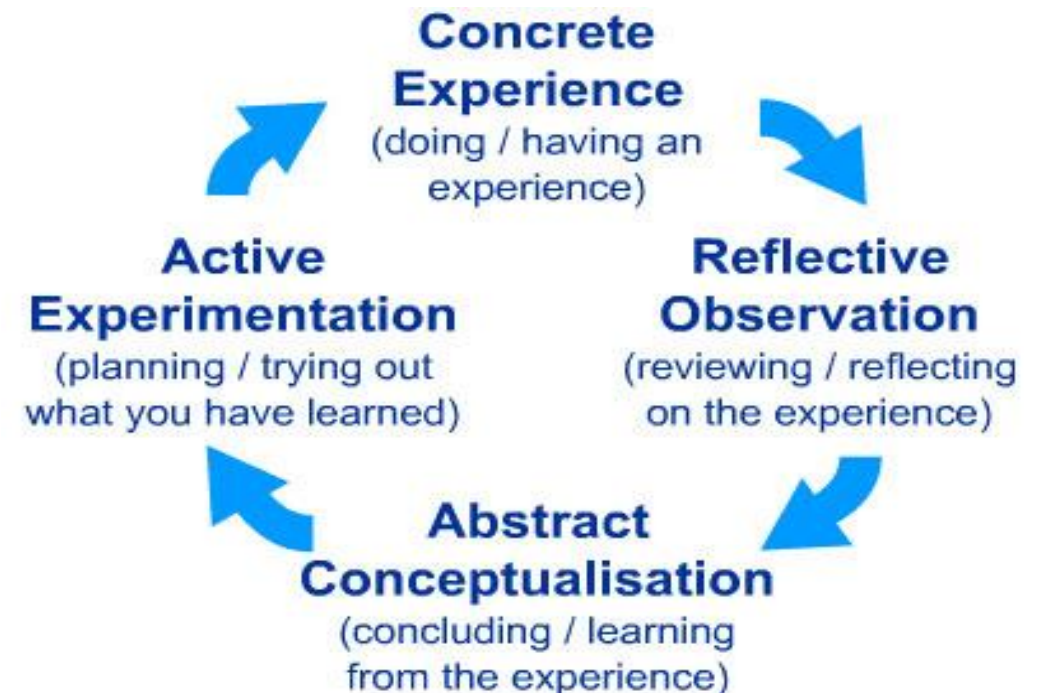
BASE students

- Interact with other 'Canadian' students
- Develop conversational English skills
- Exchange cultural knowledge: Present aspects and experiences from within your own culture and learn more about your partner's culture
- Learn more about your culture from various perspectives
- Reflect on what you have learned from interactions with your partner
- Provide constructive feedback to your partner

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: Experiential Education

Kolb's (1984) experiential learning cycle

We can map the learning cycle directly to the assignment



THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Experiential Education

Core principles of experiential education:

- Carefully chosen experiences - supported by reflection, critical analysis and synthesis
- Intellectual, emotional, social, soulful and/or physical engagement → *authenticity*
- **Educator:** sets situations, poses problems, supports learners
- **Learner:** actively engages, poses questions, investigates, solves problems, constructs meaning

(Association for Experiential Education)

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Intercultural learning

Intercultural learning and cross-cultural communication through interaction for learning

Language learning is a non-linear process (Larsen-Freeman & Cameron, 2008)

Interaction for Learning framework (Arkoudis, Baik & Richardson, 2012)

- **Goal:** increase opportunities for interaction between domestic and international students

1. Planning interaction
2. Creating environments for interaction
3. Supporting interaction
4. Engaging with subject knowledge
5. Developing reflexive processes
6. Fostering communities of learners

OUTCOMES

Providing opportunities for intercultural learning and cross-cultural communication may result in the development of:

- cross-cultural communication/language skill development for international students
- friendship and mentorship formation for domestic students
- intercultural fluency whereby students of diverse cultures learn to relate to and appreciate other cultures

STUDENT EXPERIENCES AND REFLECTION:

Cross-cultural communication

Involves adjusting to unfamiliar accents, checking understanding, expressing complex ideas in less lexically dense terms, encouraging conversation - and patience

What the BASE students experienced:

- "Most of the time the beginning of the conversation was tough because I needed time to warm up, so my partner always encouraged me to give me confidence. He's a good listener, and he's patient."
- "I learned how to be a good listener from my partner. Every time I talked to her, she smiled, nodded and encouraged me."
- "I think that we didn't have so much communication trouble. He tried his best not to speak too slow or too fast and to make me understand more easily, and I tried my best to follow his speed and learn how to speak English well."
- "To explain Chinese culture is not easy. For example, I needed to explain different customs and different social norms, and I think this is not easy for a language learner because culture includes abstract ideas."



STUDENT EXPERIENCES AND REFLECTION: Cross-cultural communication

What the domestic students experienced:

- “One thing I am happy to know is that [my partner] has learned [expressions and idioms] from me...I was delighted to see him eager to understand what I meant when I said something.”
- “I think another assumption that I had was that [my partner] would be difficult to communicate with in terms of her English skills, [but] her English was very good, she both spoke and understood it which I was impressed with.”

STUDENT EXPERIENCES AND REFLECTION:

Intercultural fluency

Involves the ability to relate to and engage with stories of other cultures (Welikala & Watkins, 2008)

Leads to increased degrees of understanding

What the BASE students experienced:

- "I learned more about Canadian culture, so now I can adapt more easily on main campus."
- "And actually, I learned many new things about my culture through our conversations because my partner told me what she learned from psychology class."
- "My partner learned a lot from me too. In her mind, China was like the old, traditional China. But after discussing with me, now this China becomes a modern country. We wear bikinis in the summer when we go to the beach..."
- "My partner and I discussed many differences between Chinese culture and Canadian culture. Although we have many differences, we found that we are so similar..we love and feel loved. We feel sad when we meet something disappointing, and we feel happy when exciting things come to us."

STUDENT EXPERIENCES AND REFLECTION:

Intercultural fluency

What the domestic students experienced:

- Appreciation of cultural similarities and variations within a culture
- Increased sensitivity towards cultural diversity (e.g., becoming sympathetic to the challenges that international students tend to face)

STUDENT EXPERIENCES AND REFLECTION:

Friendship/mentorship

While not an expectation of the project, many of the BASE students now consider their partners to be their friend

What the BASE students experienced:

- "We chatted on our cell phones and texted each other."
- "We played basketball together to improve our relationship"
- "Wow! This is a well-written essay! I hope I can write as well as you do 😊"
(comment on partner's eportfolio)
- "I was looking for a part time job and he helped me by telling me about his experience as well as to do a resume."



STUDENT EXPERIENCES AND REFLECTION: Friendship/mentorship

What the domestic students experienced:

- Development of friendships – sharing pictures, playing a videogame together, cooking a meal together
- Enhanced language skills development – English idioms, expressions, helping with homework outside of the course

LESSONS LEARNT:

Intended learning objectives



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BASE students:

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NEXT STEPS AND TAKE-AWAYS

Ample potential for other courses/disciplines to seek out opportunities to collaborate with other instructors with diverse areas of interest

Students benefit greatly from these opportunities to engage in cross-cultural communication

Learning outcomes manifest that would otherwise not have been thought possible

- Creating lasting friendships
- Changing attitudes over time
- Both students learn from one another; neither takes a position of authority

