

Some Thoughts and a Select Bibliography on Reflection

"Once unmoored from the logic of service as extracurricular, as a good thing for people to do, once service becomes an object of reflection, then society, economy, politics, power and history come tumbling into the classroom." Mary Stanley

"[Dissonance] throws learners temporarily out of balance to move them toward deeper understanding. [Reflection is] the ability to step back and ponder one's own experience, to abstract from it some meaning or knowledge relevant to other experiences. The capacity for reflection is what transforms experience into learning." Pat Hutchings and Allan Wutzdorff

"The demand for the solution of a perplexity is the steadying and guiding factor in the entire process of reflection." John Dewey

Reflection seems to be based on two related principles:

1. Teaching from the microcosm;

Creating a complex, paradoxical and meaning-rich microcosm in which a teacher can teach and a student can learn; filtering course themes through the immediacy of experience; bringing students inside the subject.

2. Creating purposeful dialogue:

Anticipating and asking the appropriate question at the right time, as one would do in any seminar; creating dissonance - between ideas, between experience and belief.

"To teach is to create a space in which the community of truth is practiced...Most definitions of leadership are about filling the space - with what we know, want done; rather than creating a space....The ground upon which one stands must be firm enough to sustain the space...." Parker Palmer

This open space, according to Palmer, has:

>a quality of openness

>boundaries (without boundaries, space is a void)

>hospitality (true hospitality requires rigor)

One way to create such a space:

>sit in a circle

>put out a fruitful question or story and insist people stay with it and take it seriously

>teach from a microcosm

*S*ervice

Service is a process of integrating intention with action in the context of a movement toward a just relationship.

Nadine Cruz, 1994

*L*earning

Learning is the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience.

David Kolb, Experiential Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development 1984: 38.

*S*ervice *L*earning

Service learning offers a particular type of experience (service) that we invite you to transform into knowledge. How do we integrate intention with action and move toward more just relationships ?

