Reflection as a Dialogic Strategy for Developing a Professional Identity

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The benefits of ‘reflection in and on action’ (Schön, 1983) are deepened insight and self-criticality (Rogers, 2001). Models to embed reflective thinking in higher education curriculum have been established (Ryan and Ryan, 2012).

It is usually a textual practice: students articulate their experiences, learning and outcomes in written portfolios, journals, or blogs.

Reflection can also be a collaborative, oral activity.

Context: A first year design practice subject, ‘Visual Communication’ at QUT.

A dialogic model of reflective practice offers the benefits of developing presentation skills, critique, professional identity, and community building.

**Dialogic Reflection: Approach**

Students apply visual theory (of lectures) to graphic design problems.

In regular (fortnightly) presentations, they critically reflect upon their work in progress by aligning it with the concepts, design principles and professional language of the lectures. This facilitates responsive peer feedback, which must be similarly couched in the formal language of the discipline.

**Dialogic Reflection: Outcomes**

- An opportunity to reflect, receive peer feedback, and iteratively improve.
- Generosity in critique develops a supportive community of practice.
- Students see design principles applied by peers in different ways.
- Formal language and presentations of the profession are rehearsed.
- Students develop a professional voice, identity and community from first year.

Within every class we have a ready-made focus group...
The feedback is invaluable.

Receiving feedback from the students was amazing and helped me resolve my work for industry.

**References:**

