

Deborah Holt

February 25, 2008

EDU 519 SP 08 HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND LEARNING

Reflection #3

Reflection # 3:

Module 15 Behavioral Explanations of Learning

Module 16 Applied Behavior Analysis

Module 17 Observational Learning and Cognitive Behavior Modification

Module 18 Elements of Cognitive Perspective

Module 19 Long Term Memory

Module 20 Cognition and Metacognition

Module 21 Learning and Teaching about Concepts

Module 22 Problem Solving and Creativity

Module 23 Teaching for Transfer

Module 24 Social Learning and Social Cognitive Theories

How do we explain the human thinking process? The word ‘metacognition’ is defined as: “Knowledge about our own thinking processes.” (Woolfolk, 2008, p. G6). This word brings back fond memories of my visit to Paris, France in October of 2006. While visiting my son, who was a student at University of Paris-Sorbonne, I spent many hours sightseeing and exploring the wonderful art and museums in Paris. The word ‘metacognition’ reminds me of how I felt when I gazed upon Rodin’s sculpture, *The Thinker*. This sculpture reminded me of a man deep in thought; however, a man who is perhaps a bit worried, or even a bit concerned about the future of mankind. To clarify my state of mind at the time, I had not been drinking any Parisian wine!

I observed that Rodin’s sculpture is simple in design; however, it expresses enormous emotion. I was left with a feeling of, “What a powerful statement an artist can demonstrate through sculpture!” Rodin’s sculpture, *The Thinker*, is his personal expression of the human thinking process. “Meichenbaum and his colleagues described metacognition as people’s awareness of their own cognitive machinery and how the machinery works.” (Woolfolk, 2008, p. 291). The three kinds of knowledge Woolfolk cites are: “(1) declarative knowledge about yourself as a learner, the factors that influence your learning and memory, and the skills, strategies and resources needed to perform a task—knowing what to do; (2) procedural knowledge or knowing how to use the strategies; and (3) conditional knowledge to ensure the completion of the task—knowing when and why to apply the procedures and strategies.” (Woolfolk, 2008, p. 291).

Declarative knowledge, contained in long-term memory, enables a person to make decisions about what to do when faced with a certain task. “People learn best when they have a good base

of knowledge in the area they are studying.” (Woolfolk, 2008, p. 293). I have traveled extensively throughout my lifetime, and have an extremely strong base knowledge of Europe and many other countries. The undergraduate education I have in the area of Social Studies will also enable me to make decisions regarding topics of instruction for the classroom. If presented with a situation where I was requested to speak on the topic of travel and various cultures, I would be able to perform this task using my declarative knowledge. (Woolfolk, 2008, p. 280). As a substitute teacher, I have been able to provide students personal interesting facts gained from my travels. I have used these personal facts to supplement the students’ learning of social studies. My declarative knowledge alone, however, is not enough to prepare me for a career in teaching. I need to develop procedural knowledge. (Woolfolk, 2008, p. 280). Through further education, I am learning how to apply this base knowledge to the methodology of teaching.

As stated before, I am currently seeking further education to develop the procedural knowledge I will need to adequately prepare me to enter the field of education. Teaching requires that I develop skills needed to perform “various cognitive activities” (Woolfolk, 2008, p. 298). I seek to become proficient in the areas of classroom management, classroom instruction and classroom assessment. I am, however, merely beginning to enter “the associative stage” of development. (Woolfolk, 2008, p. 299). For example, if I were requested to administer an assessment of what a student had learned from my classroom instruction, I would have to refer to a textbook for guidance. I have not developed the procedural knowledge required to accomplish this task automatically. (Woolfolk, 2008, p. 299). I have not mastered the skills needed to administer a student’s assessment. A teacher must be properly educated and trained for this

responsibility. I would also need to develop conditional knowledge, to administer a quality assessment of a student's learning. (Woolfolk, 2008, p. 298). I may possess the content knowledge related to an assessment; however, I am still learning "why and when" I should use an assessment in relation to students' learning. (Woolfolk, 2008, p. 298).

The personal assessment of my skills and knowledge of teaching has helped me determine that I need to become an "expert student." (Woolfolk, 2008, p. 340). The strategies and tactics I learn in the classroom will help to develop the skills I need. Skills such as note-taking and summarizing are essential to effective learning. (Woolfolk, 2008, pp. 342-343). Prior to this recent educational experience, I had never even heard of the KWL strategy. This is "a strategy to guide reading and inquiry: Before—What do I already know? What do I want to know? After—What have I learned?" (Woolfolk, 2008, p. G6). When I am reading my classroom textbooks, it is helpful to ask myself, "What do I already know about this subject?" (Woolfolk, 2008, p. 344). I do write my answers down. I also find it helpful to ask myself, "What do I want to know about the subject I am studying?" (Woolfolk, 2008, p. 344). Once I complete the readings, I find that writing the reflection essays assists me in answering the question, "What have I learned from these readings?" (Woolfolk, 2008, p. 344). From our recent classroom discussion, I learned the importance of comparing my prior knowledge to what I have learned. My personal application of the KWL strategy supports my effort and determination to become an "expert student." (Woolfolk, 2008, p. 340). The strategies and techniques I learn to apply as a student myself additionally enable me to empathize with the students I teach.

My determination to succeed as a student is complemented by classroom instruction that utilizes the method of “teaching for positive transfer.” (Woolfolk, 2008, p. 349). “What is worth learning?” (Woolfolk, 2008, p. 349). Everything that I have experienced recently as a student has been worth learning! I have observed that every instructor I have, who is also part of the Accelerated Certification for Teaching program, practices skills “past the point of mastery.” (Woolfolk, 2008, p. 350). The transfer of skills and knowledge from instructor to student occurs in each of the classrooms where I am present. I have expanded my ability of abstract thinking, and increased my motivation to excel at learning. I am able to apply what I am learning to new situations daily. I am motivated and excited to learn. This level of transfer, so eloquently stated by Woolfolk, is “high-road transfer.” (Woolfolk, 2008, p. 352).

In conclusion, this reading provided a wonderful opportunity to understand how levels of knowledge differ. It assisted me in examining my own levels of knowledge. I now understand how various levels of knowledge can be applied to teaching. Finally, the concept of “teaching for positive transfer” (Woolfolk, 2008, p. 349) enables me to appreciate the levels of instruction I am provided in my own classroom settings.

Reference:

Woolfolk, A. (2008). *Educational psychology active learning edition, 10/E* (10th ed.). Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.