

Using Reflective-Case Based Learning to Explore Personal Self

HADIJAH JAFFRI*

School of Education, Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia

*Corresponding Author: hadijahjaffri@utm.my

ABSTRACT

Reflective-case based learning is a learning strategy that combines the elements of reflective thinking with case-based learning which I use in one of my postgraduate courses (Psychology of Personality). Reflective-case-based learning is a term I coined which incorporates Gibb's reflective cyclical phases (1988) and case-based learning principles as proposed by Rosenstand (2012). Gibb's reflective cycle (1988) comprises six cyclical phases: description, feelings, evaluation, analysis, conclusion, and action plan. Other than Gibb's reflective cycle (1988), reflective-case based learning also embeds principles of case-based learning. According to Rosenstand (2012), case-based learning involves using a case in which a work method, problem, and discipline can take in any form. In this course, cases are not specified or readily accessible but rather they would be crafted based on students' personal reflective narrations which contain behavioural descriptions of their personality traits. Other than crafting cases, discussion in forums and analysing cases using lexical analysis are a part of the reflective-case-based assignments which incorporated Rosenstand's case-based learning principles and Gibb's six reflective cyclical phases. In this case, students were given sequential mini assignments that needed to be completed within eight weeks of study. For this course, normally there would be two categories of students attending it. The first category of students would take the course as an elective. The second category of students is those who would take the course as a requirement for a Master in Counselling education to obtain licensing as professional counsellors in Malaysia. My awareness of my post-graduate students' specialization necessitates me as the instructor to ensure that they not only learn about various personality theories but also have an appreciation towards various personality theories in enhancing their understanding of their personal selves. In this case, students are expected to be able to propose an insightful interpretation of personality traits based on relevant personality theories. Thus, in line with the objectives of the course in which the emphasis is to engage students to participate actively in class, reflective case-based learning is implemented to enhance students' understanding and ability in differentiating individual personalities in terms of the unit of analyses, the structure of personality, factors which influence personality as well as the relationship of personality with other aspects of human life concerning existing personality theories. For this course, even though appreciation towards personality theories is not a part of the course learning outcomes, I believe it is important to inculcate students' appreciation towards personality theories. For continuous quality improvement of this course, I assessed students' appreciation towards various personality theories through an open-ended questionnaire that was given to the students at the end of the semester. In general, students were asked about their perceptions and understanding of themselves in terms of their personality traits by relating them to relevant concepts based on personality theories. Specifically, students were asked about their appreciation of personality theories in terms of their applicability in explaining principles of personality that are relatable to their personality traits. Data collected through the open-ended questionnaire show that students can relate personality theories with their personality traits, and they also show appreciation in relating personality theories to examine human's unique personality traits. A comparison of students' performance reveals that students who underwent the process of reflective-case-based learning performed better than previous students who did not undergo it.

Keywords: active learning, case-based learning, personality psychology, reflective activity