

Using Evaluation as Action Research: Reflections on Teaching Practice Using Brookfield's Four Lenses Model

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ABSTRACT As one goes about the process of teaching there is need to sit down after every session and take stock of the proceedings with a view to identifying what went well and what might need further improvement. Four lenses that teachers could use to critically reflect on their practice are discussed in this article: eliciting evaluation from students, peer evaluation, research and theory and our own autobiographies as learners and teachers. To some extent academics are all prisoners trapped within the perceptual frameworks that determine how they view their experiences and in order to break away from this prison there is need to engage in critical reflection. In this article, through a qualitative analysis of student evaluation data, peer feedback and relevant literature; The researcher shares his reflection on his practice through experimenting with the four lenses at a historically disadvantaged university. What emerged from the reflective exercise is that looking beyond one's own self to others for their views on one's practice does indeed enrich one's knowledge and helps to improve practice. Colleagues, the literature and students can indeed serve as critical mirrors reflecting back to lecturers' images of their actions that often take them by surprise.

INTRODUCTION

Action Research and the Process of Reflection

This paper is a result of an action research process on the researcher's teaching practice over a period of three years. Traditionally research has been conducted by academics who then publish their findings in journals and other fora. Those being researched on were seen as mere instruments. Rather than bring people from outside; action research according to Gibbs (1995:30), "...brings practice and theory together, action and research together. It involves lecturers researching their own practice." Reason (2001) argues that, "...the primary purpose of action research is to develop practical knowing (knowing how to do something) moment-to-moment action by research/practitioner, and the development of learning organizations—communities of inquiry rooted in communities of practice."

Action research seeks to increase people's involvement in the creation and application of knowledge about them and about their worlds. As Reason (2001) so cogently shows, it is no longer possible to do research on persons. It is only possible to do research with persons, including them both in the questioning and sense making that informs the research, and in the ac-

tion which is the focus of the research. Action research is rooted in each participant's in-depth, critical and practical experience of the situation to be understood and acted in. As Greenwood and Levin (2007) point out, action research is an approach based on experience and engagement and depends on our willingness to rise above presupposition, to look, and to look again, to try out different behaviours, to risk security in the search for understanding and appropriate forms of action. In the same vein, Pettit (2010) shows that in action research, knowledge is co-created through a shared process, researchers become actors for change, and practitioners become learners and shapers of meaning.

In the researcher's view therefore evaluation in the action research model means that the lecturers are involved in evaluating their own teaching through continually looking at, and reflecting on their practice. The purpose of gathering evidence in this case is to assist the lecturer to continuously improve on their practice. Teaching therefore becomes a scholarly activity. "The scholarship of teaching and learning movement has encouraged many academics from a range of disciplines to research their teaching and their students' learning through, for example, participant and action research; and to publish such research" (Brew 2011).

According to Boyer (1990) the elements that define teaching as a scholarly activity are mas-

tery of the subject being taught, knowledge of pedagogical methods that have been proven effective at promoting learning and skill development, and commitment to continuing personal growth as an educator. Smith (2001:52), defines the scholarship of teaching as the contributions to a developing body of knowledge about teaching and learning and goes on to show that, "a scholarship of teaching and learning "requires a kind of 'going meta' in which faculty frame and systematically investigate questions related to student learning-the conditions under which it occurs ,what it looks like, how to deepen it, and so forth-and to do so with an eye not only to improving their own classroom but to advance practice beyond it." Brookfield (1995:28) argues that,

No matter how much we think we may have an accurate sense of ourselves we are stymied by the fact that we are using our own interpretive filters to become aware of our own interpretive filters-the pedagogic equivalent of trying to see the back of one's head while looking the bathroom mirror. To some extent we are all prisoners trapped within the perceptual frameworks that determine how we view our experiences.

In order to break away from this prison academics need to engage in critical reflection.

Critical Reflection and Triangulation

Mezirow (1990) has defined critical reflection as a critique of the assumptions on which our beliefs rest. He argues that through challenging our established and habitual patterns of expectation, we can change the meaning perspectives with which we have made sense out of our encounters with the world, others and ourselves. CHERTL Rhodes Brief Guide to the Evaluation of Teaching and Courses (2005:1) says, "Reflective practice, put simply, involves using evaluation to look at what one does in order to develop and enhance one's teaching and students' learning." Meanwhile Brookfield (1995) suggests that critical reflection requires an environment where the self-worth of the learner is respected, where the curriculum is built around the needs and aspirations of learners and where learners are willing to have their own views challenged and feel safe to challenge others. Fisher (2003) sees critical reflection in the social sciences as being able to; articulate an awareness of one's own position, through identifying the impact of one's own

influence and background; identify one's own values, beliefs and assumptions; considering other alternative ways or perspectives of viewing the world that is, being able to identify what perspectives are missing from one's own account and being able to identify how one's own views can have a particular bias that privileges one view over another

From these authorities' conception of critical reflection, it is apparent that critical reflection is fundamental in the evaluation of our practice. As one goes about the process of teaching there is need to sit down after every session and take stock of the proceedings with a view to identifying what went well and what might need further improvement.

Brookfield's Four Lenses Model

In order for critical reflection to take place one needs not be blinkered but be open and receptive to various forms of feedback on their practice. Seeing how we think and work through different lenses is the core process of reflective practice. Brookfield (1995) identifies four lenses which we can use to reflect on our practice, namely: our autobiographical experiences as learners and teachers, students' eyes, our colleagues' perceptions and surveying related literature. According to Brookfield (1995: xiii), "our autobiographical experiences as learners and teachers provide a rich (though often unacknowledged and even derided) source of material for us to probe. Second there is the lens represented by our students' eyes. We find out from our students how they perceive our actions and what it is about those actions that they find affirming or inhibiting." Third, there is the lens provided by colleagues' perceptions and experiences. Colleagues can be mirrors, mentors or critical friends with whom we engage in critical conversations about our practice. In these conversations, colleagues reflect back different versions of the events experienced. Fourth, practice can be viewed through the lens of literature. Reading inside and outside one's area of practice, can help to locate what one does within alternative theoretical frame works.

Using Autobiographical Experiences as Learners and Teachers for Reflection

Among Brookfield's four lenses, self-evaluation is one of the most effective strategies for

improving the teaching skills of lecturers. In self-evaluation teachers need to first look critically at their own practice before even looking at what others say or think about their practice. They need to hear their inner voice saying, "What I am doing right now is creative and spontaneous, yet grounded in my examined experiences. I know it's good for me and for my students. What's more, I know why it's good and if need be, I can tell you why" (Brookfield 1995:47).

Brookfield (1995:31), advises that it is a useful good starting point to examine one's experiences as a learner. He argues that academics may think they are teaching according to a widely accepted curricular or pedagogic model, only to find, on reflection, that the foundations of their practice have been laid in their autobiographies as learners. In the face of ambiguities or crises, people fall back instinctively on memories from their times as learners to guide them in their responses. He reiterates that academics may espouse philosophies of teaching that they have learned from formal study, but the most significant and most deeply embedded influences that operate on people are the images, models, and conceptions of teaching derived from their own experiences as learners.

Brookfield (1995) illustrates how experiences as learners may influence the way academics teach. He argues that teachers, for example, who were underestimated as students when they were in college are careful not to make the mistake of underestimating their own students. This predisposes them to allow students second chances, to renegotiate course requirements and deadlines, or to give students the benefit of the doubt when they are unable to do what they had promised. As another example, he concludes that teachers who were reluctant discussion participants in their own student days, are not likely to dismiss non contributors to classroom discussions as mentally negligible, disengaged or hostile. They may well interpret a student's silence as evidence of being engaged in reflective analysis.

In addition to looking at own practice, self-evaluation also involves critical reflection on information gathered in the process of looking at one's teaching through the other lenses; it involves talking back to what students and peers have said about one's teaching. Miller (2010) contends that the most important aspect to excellent critical practice involves going beyond

the collection of feedback (from self, student, peer or scholarly lenses) by altering teaching methods and goals, documenting those changes and any progress toward goals. Good critical reflection in my view however, should not involve mere gullible altering of own practice because others say so, rather, as the University of Fort Hare Brief Guide to Evaluation of Teaching of Courses (2005:7) shows, "Self-reflection means deciding which of the feedback given by others you need to take on board to help you to develop your teaching and your courses. It also means justifying on sound educational grounds why some of their comments are not valid and why you feel you do not need to respond to them."

Student's Eyes as a Reflective Lens

While students are usually considered as junior partners in the teaching and learning process, their perceptions of the teaching and learning process should not be ignored as it has an impact on how they learn. Brookfield (1995:30), argues that, "Seeing ourselves as students see us makes us aware of those actions and assumptions that either confirm or challenge existing power relationships in the classroom. They also help us check whether students take from our practice the meaning that we intend." Reflecting on his own practice, Brookfield (1995:xi) writes, "Talking to my own students made me realize that how I taught, why I taught that way and how my teaching was perceived were far from being the straight forward matters I thought they were."

Researching students' perceptions of their actions and words alerts academics to problems that their behaviour is causing and to mistakes that they might otherwise miss. This, in turn, means that we can make more appropriate decisions about how and what to teach (Brookfield 1995). Brookfield (ibid) gives some of the strategies lecturers could use to solicit information from students; the critical incident questionnaire; students learning journals and letters to successors. The critical incident questionnaire is a single page form that is handed out to students at the end of the last class each week. It comprises questions which ask students to write down some details about events which happened in class that week. It gets them to focus on specific, concrete happenings that were significant to

them. The lecturer then analyses the responses by going through them and looking for common themes and for comments that indicate problems or confusions. "Anything contentious is highlighted, as is anything that needs further clarification. These comments become the basis for the questions and issues I address publicly the next time we're together" (Brookfield 1995:117).

Students learning journals are regularly compiled summaries of students' learning experiences that are done on a weekly basis but reports submitted monthly. Guiding questions are provided to students to assist them to provide meaningful feedback for the lecturer. The student feedback is then discussed in the in-class trouble shooting periods.

Another interesting way to discover what students feel are the most crucial elements in your teaching, according to Brookfield (1995: 107), is to ask them to identify what they regard as the essential things students need to know to survive in your classroom, in a letter to hypothetical students who will be joining your class for the first time.

Reflecting on Colleagues' Perceptions and Experiences

Getting feedback from one's peers, if it is well managed, can contribute not only towards an individual teacher's professional and educational development but also promote conversations on good teaching based in disciplines/faculties and improve teaching across those disciplines/ faculties. Lomas and Nicholis (2005) define peer review of teaching as the intentional process of observation in which a university lecturer attends a colleague's teaching session with the intention of offering feedback as a 'critical friend'. Miller (2010) argues that peers can highlight hidden habits in teaching practice, and also provide innovative solutions to teaching problems. Meanwhile, Brookfield (1995:36) illuminates that, "Talking to colleagues about problems we have in common and gaining their perspectives on these increases our chances of stumbling across an interpretation that fits what is happening in a particular situation. A colleague's experience may suggest dynamics and causes that make much more sense than the explanations academics have evolved. If this happens, academics are helped enormously in their effort to work out just what they should be doing to deal with the problem".

Thus colleagues provide a useful alternative opinion. Where such a procedure is an institutional requirement, however, the lecturer needs to be involved in the selection of a peer reviewer and the main criteria for selection should be that the reviewer is committed to the primacy of staff development over summative evaluation and that the lecturer feels comfortable with him/her.

Brookfield (1995: 34) gives some of the advantages of peer evaluation as follows; "talking to colleagues about what we do unravels the shroud of silence in which our practice is wrapped; participating in critical conversations with peers opens up to their versions of events we have experienced; our colleagues serve as critical mirrors reflecting back to us images of our actions that often take us by surprise. As they describe their own experiences dealing with same crises and dilemma as we face, we are able to check, reframe and broaden our theories of practice and we start to see that what we thought were unique problems and idiosyncratic failings are shared by many others working in situations like ours."

Obtaining feedback from peers does not have to be restricted to classroom observations. Critical conversations with colleagues on teaching and learning issues will unravel many of the dilemmas and confusions we encounter in our daily classroom operations. Colleagues can open up unfamiliar avenues for inquiry, and they can give advice on how to deal with problems academics are facing.

Surveying the Literature Related to Teaching Practice

Another way of obtaining insights into one's practice is through critical reading of what other lecturers have written about their research into the teaching of their disciplines. Miller (2010: 1) writes that teachers who research, present or publish scholarly literature display an advanced vocabulary for teaching practice, which can become a "psychological and political survival necessity, through which teachers come to understand the link between their private [teaching] struggles and broader political processes." According to Brookfield (1995: 36),

Studying theory can help us to realise that what we thought were signs of our personal failings as teachers can actually be interpreted as the inevitable consequence of certain econom-

ic, social and political processes. This stops us falling victim to the belief that we are responsible for everything that happens in our classrooms.

The following are some of the benefits of surveying the literature according to Brookfield (1995), through reading theoretical literature, lecturers' existing beliefs regarding 'good' teaching can be confirmed; theoretical literature can provide multiple interpretations of familiar but impenetrable situations; literature can help us understand our situation by naming it in different ways, and by illuminating generic aspects of what we thought were idiosyncratic events and processes; It can suggest different possibilities for practice as well as helping academics to understand better what they already do and think. By studying ideas, activities, and theories that have sprung from situations outside our circle of practice, one can gain insight into which features of their world are context specific and which are more generic and reading theory can jar us in a productive way, by offering unfamiliar interpretations of familiar events and by suggesting other ways of working.

When academics engage in literature surveys they actually vicariously engage in conversation with authors of the articles they read. Freire, cited in Horton and Freire (1990) remarks, "When I meet some books, I say "meet" because some books are like persons-when I meet some books, I remake practice theoretically. I become better able to understand the theory inside of my action. Meanwhile Brookfield (1995: 186) concurs:

When we read an explanation that interprets a paradoxical experience in a new and revealing way, the experience becomes more comprehensible. As a result we feel that the world is more accessible, more open to our influence. When someone else's words illuminate or confirm a privately realised insight, we feel affirmed and recognised. Also seeing a personal insight stated as a theoretical proposition makes us more likely to take seriously our own reasoning and judgments.

The Researcher's engagement with such authorities as Freire (1970) on education for liberation, Fielder (2000) on the scholarship of teaching and Brookfield (1995) on being a reflective practitioner, for example, has left an indelible mark on the researcher's beliefs about teaching and learning.

METHODOLOGY

The Study

This study spans a period of three years at a historically disadvantaged university, starting when the researcher was a language and writing consultant through my period as a lecturer in the Post Graduate Diploma in Higher Education at the University's Teaching and Learning Centre. The study is a reflection based on empirical data collected from peers and students.

Population and Sampling

The peer review sample consisted of 8 fellow language and writing consultants who individually observed my consultation sessions with students on assignment writing and two lecturer peers who observed my teaching. The student sample comprised 12 lecturers from the historically disadvantaged university, enrolled for the Post Graduate Diploma in Higher Education and Training. This was a very diverse group of students drawn from across all faculties. The sample comprised 6 junior lectures, 4 lecturers, 1 senior lecturer and 1 professor from the faculties of Science and Agriculture, Management and Commerce, Law and Social Sciences and Humanities. The Post Graduate Diploma in Higher Education and Training is a postgraduate qualification targeted mainly at academics who have no prior professional background in pedagogy/education. The module facilitated in was the 'Nature of Learning Module', a 45 credit bearing compulsory module in the diploma.

Data Collection and Analysis

An observation rubric was developed for use by the language and writing consultants for observing each other's consultation sessions. For observation of peer teaching no rubric was developed but the peer had to look at facilitation skills and how the classroom environment was managed. For obtaining feedback from students, the researcher used the University On-line Evaluation Assistant (EA) which had been developed to assist staff obtain feedback from their students. According to the University's Evaluation of Teaching and Course Policy, (2004), in order to create a 'culture' of evaluation in the university, students must be encouraged to see their

participation in evaluating teaching and courses as part of their role as active learners.

Through the EA, a lecturer could construct a student survey to suit his/her needs. Students did not write their names on the response sheets and a neutral person other than the lecturer administered the instrument. This ensured that students were candid in their responses. Some of the questions on the EA required a ranked response and some required a free-form response. The data was then analysed by consultants in the Teaching and Learning Centre who then provided both written and oral feedback and offered to work with lecturers on any interventions the lecturer might require. For analysis, the feedback sheets from students and reports from the peers were analysed and emerging themes identified.

RESULTS

Feedback from Fellow Language and Writing Consultants

Observation of consultation sessions by peers revealed interesting feedback as shown below. The feedback indicated that the researcher generally satisfactorily opened his consultation sessions by first introducing the peer observer to the student and vice-versa. One peer commented, *He introduced himself and me which made the student free and a relaxing environment was created.*

Session content and relevance of consultation strategies used: The evaluations showed that the researcher was able to accommodate the student in the discussion rather than doing all the talking myself. Engagement with students was cited as a good way of helping the students to learn. One observer wrote, *it was more of an open discussion with both parties participating fully.* This was echoed by another, *First allowed the consulting person to comment or raise a point before adding or hinting at another point, used real life examples, withheld 90/10 rule.*

The researcher was also commended for asking the students questions during the discussion to test their understanding. One observer wrote, *Guiding questions were thoroughly used* and another echoed, *most of the talking relating to both the style of writing and content was given by the learner and the consultant was asking probing questions,* and also credited for

redirecting questions back to the students as shown in this quote, *Questions were being redirected and there was adequate use of materials /visual aids.*

Concerning the closure of sessions, the researcher was lauded for asking students to summarise the main points of sessions as shown in this response, *Learner allowed to say what she had benefited and whether she was ready to be followed for feedback.*

General suggestions and comments for improvement of facilitation practice: Under general suggestions for the improvement of facilitation practice, both commendations and suggestions for improvement were given. One observer felt that generally the session appeared fruitful because the student ended up pointing out a number of relevant issues in assignment writing. Another observer was impressed by the fact that the facilitator encouraged the students to bring their own study material.

Under suggestions for improvement some observers felt that more time should have been given for the consultation sessions (Some of the sessions were rather rushed however because of the students' lecture attendance commitments.) There were also suggestions on the need to set out norms at beginning of sessions to avoid unnecessary disruptions. One peer observer wrote, *I would suggest that consultant sets the norms and expectations with learner, e.g. the student's phone rang twice during the session.*

Although most observers lauded the opportunities created for engagement and greater student talk, there were some who felt that the facilitator's talking was rather more dominant during the sessions and that the 90% student talk and 10% facilitator talk rule was not observed. One peer quipped, *Even though the Language and writing consultant was asking questions that the student was answering, the rate of talking time was more on the Language and writing Consultant.*

It was quite affirming to note that some of the observers were also learning from observing the researcher's facilitation and that they would try the techniques used in their own sessions. After attempts to reduce the percentage of own talk during consultations following feedback from previous observations, after another observation two colleagues who wrote in the feedback report, *I think the consultation was a success and most of the helpful strategies were used and*

some were enlightening to me and I will use them in my consultations and, I liked the way you led the learner to contribute or talk more. Generally it was a very good Language and Writing consultation. I'll try to incorporate the above strategies in my sessions!

Feedback from Fellow Lecturers

Comments by a peer who observed several sessions in progress in the Post Graduate Diploma in Higher Education and Training had affirming comments. He lauded knowledgeability of the subject matter, maintenance of good rapport with students, active involvement of the students in the teaching and learning process and encouraging students to reflect on their practices in the light of insights gained from the sessions. The following are extracts from the consultant's report,

- ♦ *The following were the positive aspects of your teaching facilitation; Knowledgeability of the subject content, good communication and presentation skills, maintaining good rapport with your students / participants and the use of the minute paper for formative assessment. Also students were actively involved through your invitation of comments and questions.*
- ♦ *The fact that you encouraged your students to reflect on their practices in light of insights gained in your session is commendable. Not only does this exercise enable your participants to write their teaching philosophies but it also interrogates, approves and or disapproves their current teaching practices.*
- ♦ *Not only did you introduce your students / participants in discourse about teaching and learning in the HET context but you also tried to transform the way your students/participants think about and foster learning*

Of concern was the fact although positive aspects of the teaching and facilitation were given, no areas for improvement were suggested.

Feedback from Students Surveys

For obtaining anonymous feedback from students on teaching, the University On-line Evaluation Assistant (EA) which had been developed to assist staff obtain feedback from their stu-

dents was used. Two surveys were administered and analysed by two colleagues in the Centre on separate occasions. Prominent in the reports according to participants was the clarity with which sessions were facilitated, the firm grounding in the subject matter and ability to provide guidance while allowing participants to form their own opinions. The following are two extracts from the reports produced by the colleagues, who analysed the data,

- ♦ *It is clear that the consultant in question enjoys significant esteem among the course participants particularly for the manner in which he facilitates sessions*
- ♦ *Participants particularly appreciate the thoroughness of the course content, the high level of preparation of the consultant and the opportunity they are given to actively participate through discussion, questions and presentations. This methodology clearly makes them feel valued.*
- ♦ *Your participants appreciate your thorough preparation, their active involvement and your ability to make their contributions relevant. They also comment favorably on the range of teaching methods employed.*
- ♦ *Overall, participants have commented on the clarity with which the consultant facilitates sessions, his firm grounding in the subject matter and his ability to provide guidance while allowing participants to form their opinions. One could therefore deduce that this consultant is a skilled, dedicated and passionate individual who enjoys the respect of those who attend his course.*

The reports also indicated areas where participants felt things could have been done differently, for example, the feelings that readings for sessions were too many and the need for more time for student input during sessions. The following extracts from the reports are worth noting;

One aspect that might warrant consideration is the number of readings given to participants. It appears that some participants might find it challenging to add the course content to an already large work load. Although one would not want to see a lowering of standards, it would be unfortunate to lose prospective participants as a direct result of a heavy course load. Two students are quoted in the report as

having said, *'Everything is okay so far, I only suggest that he decreases the numbers of readings' and 'Allow a little more time for class input as that helps to involve the participants and facilitates interest.'*

One comment worth noting was the admission by one of the peers that she had limited knowledge of the system of the evaluation of lectures by students although she had agreed to analyse the student evaluation data. She wrote, *I have found the task challenging given my very limited involvement in the evaluation overall.*

DISCUSSION

Among Brookfield's four lenses, self-evaluation is given as one of the most effective strategies for improving the teaching skills of lecturers. Self-evaluation, as shown in a previous section, involves critical reflection on information gathered in the process of looking at one's teaching through the other 'lenses'; it involves 'talking back' to what one's students and peers have said about one's teaching. Self-reflection means deciding which of the feedback given by others you need to take on board to help you to develop your teaching and your courses. "It also means justifying on sound educational grounds why some of their comments are not valid and why you feel you do not need to respond to them" (Brief Guide to Evaluation of Teaching of Courses 2005: 7).

Looking at feedback from the three lenses, it was found that some of the feedback tended to converge. From both peers who observed the facilitation and teaching and the peer who analysed student survey feedback it was affirming to note that both peers and students lauded the knowledgeability of the subject matter, maintenance of good rapport with students, active involvement of the students in the teaching and learning process and encouraging students to reflect on their practices in the light of insights gained from the sessions. The researcher has continued to consolidate these positive aspects as he develops in his teaching. In this regard Phillip and Wozniak (2009) argue that peer reviews can be developmental, acting as a means to advance teaching and as a tool for professional development.

Another affirming emerging issue was that while the intention of obtaining feedback from peers was to help me improve my own practice it emerged that the learning process was two-way with peers learning from observing my practice

and with some indicating that they would actually try some the techniques they thought were effective in my facilitation. This resonates with findings from the Centre for Teaching and Learning (2013) which reveals that most reviewers find that observing colleagues' course materials or teaching methods stimulates thinking about their own teaching development. Thoughtful peer review may expose peer reviewers to new teaching techniques, both in and out of the classroom, and challenge greater self-reflection.

In terms of areas for improvement, it was eye opening that while the researcher thought it was necessary to give participants as many readings as possible to empower them, this could actually be interpreted as an overload. In order not to overload the students, readings are now classified into two categories, the core readings and additional optional readings. This way participants can concentrate on the core readings for sessions and only refer to the rest of the readings for enrichment purposes when they have the time.

While the comments from the peers and students were generally affirming, it was rather puzzling to have no critique from the peers. The researcher had expected some feedback on areas improvement but none were reflected in the report from the peer who observed lessons in the Post Graduate Diploma in Higher Education. One of the weaknesses of peer feedback is that academics might unconsciously choose those peers who share their own philosophies and hence are unlikely to get any different feedback from what they already believe to be good practice. Alternatively, the lack of feedback on areas that needed improvement, as Flaman and Johnson (2012) could be because the peer reviewer, as a fellow colleague may have been unwilling to make hard decisions such as pointing out weaknesses in my teaching. Although it was worrying that all the feedback from the peer was positive, it nevertheless gave confidence that the researcher was in the right direction.

Another major finding worth discussing is the admission by a peer who analysed students' survey feedback and produced a report who indicated that she had limited expertise in the process of obtaining feedback from students but proceeded to produce a report. She wrote, *I have found the task challenging given my very limited involvement in the evaluation overall.* This calls for the need to provide the necessary orientation and training to staff analysing students'

feedback and providing reports for lecturers if these reports are to be meaningful.

CONCLUSION

Going through the reflective journey in the career in higher education has indeed been an enriching experience. Not only have certain original assumptions and beliefs about teaching and learning been challenged, the reflection has broadened the researcher's horizon in respect to teaching and learning in the higher education context. Reflective practice, through using evaluation to look at teaching practice has helped to develop and enhance my teaching and students' learning. Colleagues, the literature and students can indeed serve as critical mirrors reflecting back to us images of our actions. One needs however to trade cautiously when interpreting feedback from Brookfield's for lenses and not gullibly accept all without question when one feels there is educational sense in how one has been facilitation learning. Notwithstanding this caution, academics would benefit greatly by trying out the Brookfield model in reflecting on their teaching practice.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the findings and conclusions above, the following recommendations are put forward;

- ♦ Academics at institutions of higher education should develop a culture of reflecting on their practice in order to improve it,
- ♦ Academics should guard against using only one lens to reflect on their practice as using more lenses enables triangulation,
- ♦ Although feedback from other people can be valuable in improving one's teaching practice, academics should not gullibly accept feedback but should critically reflect on such feedback based on their own philosophies and beliefs and convictions on teaching and learning.

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