



## Reflection as a Physiotherapy Educator

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### ABSTRACT

Practice-based educator role is one of the core roles for health care practitioners. This role has an immense responsibility in enhancing learners' knowledge towards the actual clinical practice, to prepare them to work with clients and for future professional development. Practitioners, even though they are aware and understand the importance of this role, lacking in exposure in educating and learning just on-the job make them not well-prepared to carry the role. This reflective essay has allowed the author to evaluate her performance as an educator, identifying the weaknesses, to obtain a clearer picture and better outlook on precisely on educators' role in practice-based learning. Hence, she will able to improve; be a much better, more consistent and more competent educator as well as share it with others.

### KEYWORD

Physiotherapy educator,  
Learning style,  
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I have been involved in practice-based setting as an educator for the past several years. However, carrying the responsibility without a formal education in the area, make my role is inconsistent. This reflective essay has allowed me to evaluate my performance as an educator, identifying my weaknesses, to obtain a clearer picture and better outlook on precisely on educators' role in practice-based learning. Hence, I will able to improve; be a much better, more consistent and more competent educator.

Practice-based educator role is one of the core roles for health care practitioners (1). This role has an immense responsibility in enhancing learners' knowledge towards the actual clinical practice, to prepare them to work with clients and for future professional development (2). Practitioners, even though they are aware and understand the importance of this role, lacking in exposure in educating and learning just on-the job make them not well-prepared to carry the role (3).

As a practitioner, I feel I have good communication skills when dealing with clients and other health profession. However, I neglected the importance of these skills during educating learners. I communicate with learners only when it was necessary because I thought of doing this I became more professional but I created a huge gap instead.

I now realised communication skills are the key component in facilitating learning, thus, I need to apply these skills during educating learners. I shall become more approachable where learners are able to communicate with me with no time restriction during placement. I could try to encourage more interaction during practice where I could promote two way discussion. By being more approachable to learners, it does not mean I am not being professional. I will still be able to maintain my professionalism as long as I am practicing main ethics and philosophy in my profession (4). This will give a greater opportunity for learners to see me as a role

model because of my credibility; being approachable and professional.

I am very interested in learning process and (5) stated that this is the other quality that educators should have. I will improve this quality by trying my best to find suitable methods in facilitating learning where I can stimulate and guide learners to learn to ensure the success of practice-based learning. This quality will help and encourage learners to discuss anything related to the placement, skills, to ask for a guide in finding resources or advice which would help the learning process to be more reliable and consistent (6,7).

I feel, in order for me to produce proactive, dynamic and lifelong learners; I should change my concept of teaching from transmitting to facilitate the learning development (8). I shall consider implementing "FAIR" principles (9) that stand for feedback, activities, individualisation, and relevance in order to help me to facilitate deep as well as long lasting learning. This principle gives me idea to facilitate the learning by structuring and planning the learning experience that relevant which suit individual needs (10). I also shall consider using a variety of methods or activities in teaching and giving constructive feedback regularly.

In planning learners' placement, I managed to create a timetable on which area of placement should the learners covered based on the university syllabus and expectations. My plan; however, was not sufficient for the learners to gain learning experience. This was because I disregard the learners' objectives and expectations which are more significant and reliable in planning their practice-based learning (11). I also failed to structure the learning experience that suggested by (12) should be done at an early stage in practice-based learning.

A learning agreement could be the useful method for me to identify learners' objectives; therefore, I will able to structuring their learning experiences. I could assist learners to identify their learning outcome based on the core learning outcomes by analysing the needs, level of knowledge, theory basis, skills and past clinical exposure as well as an opportunity to develop new experiences. Moreover, I could identify strategies and resources that could be used in facilitating learning, planning for the suitable method in assessing as well as evaluating experience (13). In summary, the content of the

agreement consists of the expectations and objectives from the placement, the preferred style of learning and resources that required in assisting learning process. In addition to that, it should also include the parameter that they would like to use as outcome measure and preferred way to be assessed. In order for me to gather all the analysis, I shall consider applying one of these assessments such as Johari's window framework, learning needs assessment (14) or self-assessment questionnaires (15).

Despite my failure to plan the learners' experience effectively, I do have my strength in providing a supportive learning environment. I encouraged peer reading in order for the learners to get a clearer picture and more information regarding what they will learn throughout the placement. This will generate ideas and know what to expect during practice as they might able to relate the theory to the practice. I noticed by using this method, I could help learners to develop their skills in generating or formulating questions and answers that direct learners to self-directed learning where the learners are involved in searching for information with relevant resources.

I also used demonstration as my teaching method; however, I was lacking in explanation. I shall improve my demonstration technique by simultaneously giving explanation during the practice. I believe by doing this and good observation from learners, they would able to have ideas in recognising handling techniques, reflect the action and interpret the findings (16) stated this could help in developing learners' confidence, understanding, perceptual skills, reasoning skills and manual skills. In addition to that, demonstration technique is expected to develop reflective skills, thus, I would attempt to consider three approaches of demonstrations such as 'follow me', 'hall of mirror' and 'joint experiment' which known as reflection-in-action. This model of facilitation will assist learners to choose the style that they are preferred during gaining experience. This is because every learner has different style of learning from one to another (16); hence, by giving a chance for them to decide which model that suits them better.

For the first approach for instance, 'follow me', I shall demonstrate my action as overall, while learners will observe and take a note. I will then repeat my action and simultaneously explain the important point or reason of my action and

during this phase learners are encourage to ask questions. After I explain and answer any question, I will repeat my action without disruption. This is for learners to have a better idea about my action and to stimulate critical thinking.

I also perhaps could use another approach such as 'hall of mirror' model. This is where the demonstration will alternate with explanation, discussion about any challenge that rise up or feedback from the observers. The action could be performed by me or learners; depend on their preferences. This is to encourage more reflective discussion, encourage feedback; therefore learners could identify their strength and weakness.

Another approach I shall use is "joint experiment". I will perform my action and will stop in some part of the process and ask for learners' opinion and ideas on how to progress. I will try to proceed with the suggestion and stop at the key point where I will ask for the feedback as well as evaluation of the effectiveness. This could stimulate the application of clinical reasoning and reflection which will lead to critical thinking skills that very useful in professional development (17).

In assessing the learners' performances, I had misunderstood the term of "assessment" session. I thought this session was the correct time for me to judge the learners and fail them if they were not good. I assessed the learners' performances on the last day of placement and on this day, the learners were given feedbacks and marks on how they had performed throughout the placement. During giving feedback, I was not professional when I tend to criticises rather than giving constructive feedback. I also never knew that assessment is divide into two parts; formative and summative.

I feel my understanding about the definition of assessment is much better now. This is when I read articles (18, 19) which I now understand that the assessment is a social interaction that focus on providing guidance and feedback to learners which involves evidences gathering, analyse and response to change. Based on this, I now realised my mistakes in assessing the learners. The main thing is I should understand the purpose and the different in formative and summative assessment. Formative assessment is when I provide my feedback towards learners' performances throughout the placement. I shall

practicing giving feedback regularly in daily basis, for instance, during demonstration where I could have two chances at one time; facilitating learning and giving feedback. My feedback may come from my observations, questioning and answering session. I also could note down the important point or thoughts which I could use as a guide during giving feedback and I feel by doing this my feedback will be more specific and consistent (20). I might face challenges where some learners will react negatively to what I say. Therefore, I feel I have to practice in giving constructive feedback, where I will try to make my comment more motivate and encouraging and I believe failure to do this will demoralise learners and lowered down their self-esteem (20). In addition to that, I shall consider implementing self-feedback where learners could reflect their own practice, observe and appraise their own performances. I believe this could lead to more collaboration between educator and learners and developing reflective practice as well as clinical reasoning skills (21) which two of key components in developing professional competency.

During summative assessment, learners' performances will be assessed as overall and be based on the criteria that have been set up by the stakeholder. Before giving summative feedback, I think I should repeat the same stages in formative session; to choose the focus of assessment, the method in collecting evidence, setting the standard (22), identifying the criteria to describe performance and a method to deliver the feedback. This is in order for me to enhance the quality and meet the needs of stakeholder.

In a nutshell, after evaluating my role as practice-based educator and planning for changes in my practice, I feel my role as practice-based educator now more significant than before. This is because I fully understand and realised that I have a greater role to play in practice-based setting. I would try to enforce for these changes as I want to an educator who could produce learners that well- equipped with the knowledge and skills, thus, to be a quality and lifelong practitioner in my profession.

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