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FOSTERING PROFESSIONAL AND PERSONAL GROWTH IN PSYCHOLOGY STUDENTS: THE POWER OF REFLECTIVE PRACTICE THROUGH SUBJECT MATTER TEXTS IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING

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ABSTRACT

In higher education, especially for psychology students learning English as a foreign language, reflective practice plays a crucial role in enhancing both their reading competencies and professional development. With stress becoming an increasingly significant issue in psychology, reading texts related to stress psychology offers students a dual opportunity: improving their language skills while deepening their professional knowledge. This article explores how reflective practices, through intensive and extensive reading, foster both personal and professional growth. Specifically, it highlights how Reflection-in-action during class discussions and Reflection-on-action through independent reading assignments help students engage with content, refine their critical thinking, and contribute to their professional development.

KEYWORDS: Reflective practice, foreign language learning, professional growth, reading competence, stress psychology, psychology students, Reflection-in-action, Reflection-on-action, intensive reading, extensive reading.

Introduction

For psychology students learning English as a foreign language, language acquisition is not just about memorizing vocabulary and grammar but also about gaining the ability to engage with professional texts in their field. In today's rapidly evolving academic and professional environments, students must be able to not only communicate effectively in a second language but also critically engage with content directly relevant to their careers. One crucial issue in psychology today is stress and its impact on individuals, making it an important area of study for psychology students.

This article examines the role of reflective practice in improving both language competencies and professional development for psychology students. It focuses specifically on how reflective

reading of stress psychology texts can enhance students' understanding of both language and professional content. By engaging with these texts, students can gain insights that benefit their language skills and their understanding of the field, creating a holistic learning experience.

Research and methods.

Reflective Learning: Enhancing Personal and Professional Growth

Reflective learning involves students thinking critically about what they have read, done, or learned. This type of learning encourages students to relate the lesson at hand to their own experiences, making meaning out of the material, and engaging in deeper understanding rather than simply memorizing facts or concepts. It requires metacognition—thinking about one's thinking—and helps students see the connection between their efforts and the outcomes they achieve. Through reflective practice, students can take responsibility for their learning, becoming more self-aware and aware of their motivations and actions.

Reflective learning is particularly advantageous in the context of psychology students, as it helps them link theoretical knowledge from their studies with real-world experiences in the field. As students engage with stress psychology texts, they are able to integrate new knowledge with existing understanding and reflect on how it might apply in their professional future. This process of reflection fosters personal and professional growth.

However, reflective learning does not happen automatically. It takes time and practice, as students must be encouraged to actively engage with the material, reflect on their learning, and integrate this reflection into their professional and personal development. The integration of reflective learning into foreign language education, especially through professional subject matter texts like those in psychology, enhances both academic and practical competencies.

Theories of Reflective Practice in Education

The development of reflective practice has been significantly influenced by key theorists, each offering insights that are particularly relevant to psychology students learning English as a foreign language.

John Dewey, a prominent figure in educational theory, emphasized that reflection is essential for effective action. He argued that students must first think critically about the material they encounter before applying it in practice. According to Dewey, reflection serves as a necessary precursor to action, helping students understand and internalize knowledge, which can then be effectively used in professional context

Donald Schön expanded on Dewey's work by distinguishing between two types of reflection: *Reflection-in-action* and *Reflection-on-action*. *Reflection-in-action* occurs during the process of performing a task, as students reflect on their thoughts and actions while they are engaging with the material. For psychology students, this might occur during in-class discussions of stress psychology texts, where they analyze concepts in real time and connect them to their personal experiences and professional knowledge.

On the other hand, *Reflection-on-action* takes place after the activity. Students reflect on what they have learned and how they applied it outside the classroom, such as during extensive reading assignments. This allows them to gain deeper insights and integrate new knowledge into their existing frameworks, improving both language skills and professional expertise. Schön's concepts help psychology students not only understand the material better but also refine their professional practice.

David Kolb developed a learning cycle that emphasizes the importance of experience, observation, and reflection. His model involves active learning stages of experiencing, reflecting, conceptualizing, and experimenting. Kolb argued that moving through these stages is vital for becoming a reflective learner. For psychology students, engaging in reflective practice means actively participating in discussions, reflecting on the content, and integrating that learning into

both language and professional development. Kolb's cycle encourages students to use their experiences with stress psychology texts to further enhance their knowledge and understanding of both the language and the concepts discussed.

Result and discussion.

Applying Reflective Practice to Psychology Students' Language Learning

Reflective practice, particularly through the use of subject matter texts, plays a pivotal role in fostering both language learning and professional development in psychology students. In the context of learning English as a foreign language, stress psychology texts offer students the opportunity to engage with complex psychological concepts while also improving their language skills.

Engaging with subject matter texts allows psychology students to expand their professional knowledge while also enhancing their comprehension and vocabulary in English. These texts often contain specialized language and complex psychological terms that require reflection and analysis. By engaging with these texts, students not only improve their reading competencies but also deepen their understanding of psychological theories and practices.

For instance, reading about the psychological effects of stress can provide students with a deeper understanding of both psychological concepts and the English terminology used to describe these phenomena. This process of reflection—integrating professional content with language learning—is a cornerstone of reflective practice, allowing students to make meaningful connections between theory and practice.

Schön (1983) highlighted the importance of reflection, stating that *“Reflection is a way of thinking about what we do while we do it, and then stepping back and reflecting on it afterward.”* For psychology students, this reflective process is essential in making connections between their language learning and professional development.

Incorporating Intensive and Extensive Reading for Reflective Practice

To promote reflective learning, both intensive and extensive reading strategies are essential.

Intensive Reading (Reflection-in-action): Intensive reading involves a close, detailed analysis of a text. In the classroom, this may involve reading a short passage from a stress psychology article and discussing it in depth. Students reflect on the material in real-time, analyzing the psychological terminology used, and making connections to their personal and professional experiences. This helps them improve both language comprehension and critical thinking.

Extensive Reading (Reflection-on-action): Extensive reading takes place outside the classroom, where students read longer texts with a focus on comprehension and fluency. After reading, students reflect on how the content connects with their professional knowledge and write reflective essays or engage in discussions. These tasks encourage deeper reflection and integration of knowledge, allowing students to connect new information with what they have already learned and apply it in professional contexts.

Online resources and materials for extensive reading also play a crucial role in promoting reflective practice. These resources allow students to access a wide range of subject matter texts at their convenience, facilitating further reflection and learning outside the classroom.

Conclusion.

Reflective practice is an invaluable tool for psychology students learning English as a foreign language. By engaging with subject matter texts such as those related to stress psychology, students not only enhance their language competencies but also deepen their understanding of psychological concepts. The combination of *Reflection-in-action* during intensive reading and *Reflection-on-action* through extensive reading provides students with opportunities to engage deeply with the material, refine their critical thinking, and improve their professional knowledge.

Through reflective practice, psychology students can enhance both their academic and professional development, preparing them for future careers where they can apply both their language skills and professional expertise. As Schön (1983) noted, the reflective process is crucial for improving practice, and this is especially true in the context of foreign language learning for professional purposes.

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