

Structured Digital Reflection as Pedagogical Scaffolding

An Action Learning Study in Supervision Education

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Introduction

In professional education, students often describe practice situations in detail while struggling to analyze them through disciplinary concepts. Reflection does not become analytical simply because students are asked to reflect. The study examines a reflection activity built around three written questions in Padlet, in a Norwegian continuing education course in supervision.

- RQ1** How does structured digital reflection support students' movement from experiential description toward conceptually informed analysis in supervision education?
- RQ2** What pedagogical opportunities and tensions emerge when Padlet is used as a scaffold for individual and collective reflection?

Methods

23

students

12

sessions in one year

273

Padlet entries

18

survey replies (78%)

Practitioner action learning. The students were experienced supervisors of workplace apprentices, and the first author both taught the course and studied it. Thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2021) of four complementary data sources, which were Padlet reflections, anonymous student feedback, teacher observation notes, and peer supervision notes.

- The three fixed questions**
- (1) What happened in the supervision situation?
- (2) Which disciplinary concepts can be used to analyze the situation?
- (3) What would I have done differently?

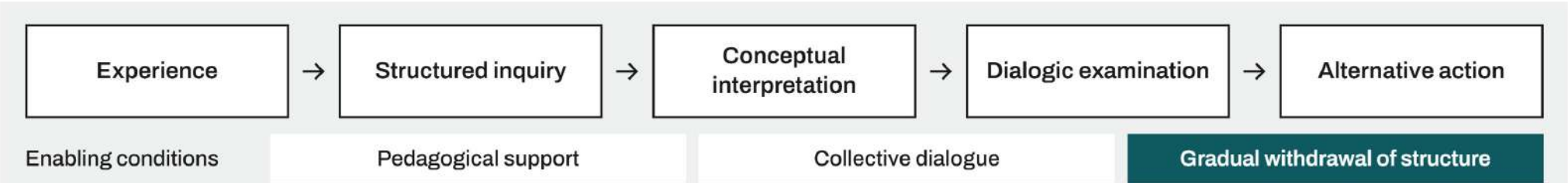


Fig. 1. The reflection model developed for this study. The movement holds only when the three enabling conditions are present.

Results and Discussion

From experiential description to conceptually informed reflection

Early entries recounted what had happened. Later entries used concepts as interpretive resources and proposed alternative action. Some late entries stayed descriptive, and some concepts were used mechanically or imprecisely.

"The questions helped me to go deeper than merely describing"

Concept use is not evidence of analytical depth

Structured prompts may increase the visibility of conceptual language without demonstrating that concepts have become internalized analytical tools.

Participation, visibility and collective reflection

The written format lowered the threshold for participation. About 40% of the entries received substantive responses. The remaining 60% received affirming comments or none.

"everyone had the opportunity to contribute"

Participation is not identical to dialogue

Padlet redistributed opportunities to contribute, and did not automatically redistribute authority over the direction of the learning process.

Pedagogical tensions

Students reported time pressure and textual overload. The fixed questions were support for many and constraint for a minority, and the same three questions produced both inquiry and task completion.

"Perhaps fewer questions would have given more time for reflection"

Scaffolding must be faded

A progression across the year from fixed analytical questions, through partly open questions and student generated analytical questions, toward independent reflection and peer challenge.

Conclusions

Structured digital reflection can support students' movement from description toward analysis, but only when the structure is temporary and directed toward independent professional judgment.

Limitations and ethics. The sample is small and context dependent, the first author held a dual role, and there was no comparison group, so the design cannot attribute change to the intervention. The study claims analytical generalizability and makes no statistical claim. All participants gave informed consent, and the study underwent a data protection assessment by Sikt.