CURRENT DEBATES AND ISSUES IN REFLECTIVE PRACTICE

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In this talk, we offer a critical review of reflective practice (RP), drawing attention to particular problems with its representation, as well as proposing a more evidence-based and data-led approach. Our central argument is that RP in the fields of applied linguistics, TESOL and education is widely accepted and actively promoted, while, at the same time, there has been little corresponding data-led description of its value, processes and impact.

Using extracts of data from a range of contexts, we argue that the fields of Education and Applied Linguistics are well-placed to describe the ways in which reflection ‘gets done’. Both disciplines have the potential to provide insights and guidance into the promotion of reflection as a developmental practice. Arguably, too many RP accounts rely on general summaries and so are neither critical, transparent, nor usable by other practitioners. A key aspect of developing a more critical approach is the need to share examples of ‘reflection in action’ so that its nature and value can be better understood.

We also argue that RP needs to be rebalanced, away from a reliance on written forms and taking more account of spoken, collaborative forms of reflection; in sum, we argue for a more dialogic, data-led and collaborative approach.