

# **Learning Taxonomy Derived from a Service Learning Tour**



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# How do people learn through service?

- Via ‘knowing’
- Via ‘experience’
- Via ‘reflection’
- To ‘attitude change’

“Experience without change”

Is that your conclusion?



# What is Learning?

- Learning encompasses knowledge, skills, values and attitudes.
- Learning can be examined in terms of both processes and products.



# Jean Piaget

- Learning as a **knowledge-construction** process
- Student may **construct very different understandings** even after interacting with the same objects in the same environment.



# Experiential Education

- A philosophy and methodology in which educators purposefully engage with learners in **direct experience and focused reflection** in order to increase knowledge, develop skills and clarify values



# Dewey

- All genuine education comes about through experience – but that **not all experiences are genuinely or equally educative**
- Experiences should acquire understanding which enables them **to address personal, social and moral dilemmas** in the present and future



# How learning be described?

- Through Learning Taxonomy





# Tang - Six-level meaning of learning

- **Level 1: Learning as acquiring knowledge** – gaining more knowledge (quantitative).
- **Level 2: Learning as preparing for examinations** or completing assignments – fulfilling the requirements of the course (externally controlled).
- **Level 3: Learning as applying** – direct use of theories or methodologies in real-life situations (job skills orientated).





## Tang - Six-level meaning of learning

- **Level 4: Learning as explaining** and relating phenomena – using theories and perspectives to make sense of the world.
- **Level 5: Learning as changing one's own perspectives** or attitudes – comparing alternative perspectives.
- **Level 6: Learning as personal development** – becoming a different person.



# Biggs – SOLO Taxonomy

- Stage 1: **Pre-structured**: Learners acquire bits of unconnected information, which have no organization and make no sense.
- Stage 2: **Uni-structural**: Learners make simple and obvious connections, but show little evidence that their significance has been grasped.



# Biggs – SOLO Taxonomy

- Stage 3: **Multi-structural**: Learners make a number of connections, but meta-connections between them are missed, as is their significance for the whole.
- Stage 4: **Relational**: Learners appreciate the significance of the parts in relation to the whole.



# Biggs – SOLO Taxonomy

- Stage 5: **Extended abstract:** Learners make connections both within and beyond the subject area, showing they are able to generalize and transfer the principles and ideas.



# Present Study

- A service learning tour



# Sample

- A purposive sample of a service tour to Mainland China was selected for examination. The tour was organized by a Hong Kong school to Liannan, Guangdong
- 30 S1~S6 Students
- 6 Days





# Data

- Daily journal writing;
- End-of-trip ‘sharing’ passages;
- Observation and interviewing by the researcher.





# Data Analysis

- Grounded theory approach was adopted which is a qualitative research method that uses a systematic set of procedures to develop **an inductively derived grounded theory about a phenomenon.**

(Strauss and Corbin, 1990, p. 24)



## Result: A Learning Taxonomy

- The **highest level reached** was selected for analysis.
- Hierarchical structure, means that the lower-level categories are **embedded** in the higher-level ones.
- The levels of learning are **not discrete but developmental**.

(Tang, 2003; Marton et al., 1993)



# Reflective learning level descriptors

<b>Level</b>	<b>Descriptors</b>	<b>Indicators</b>
1	<b>Description</b>	Description of the physical environment; reporting of events that happened. The written work contains direct observation and direct reporting of incidents that took place on the tour.
2	<b>Relational description</b>	Description of the physical environment or reporting of incidents that happened, not only through direct observation in the tour but also with evidence of relating the observation/ incidents to other information, understanding, knowledge, experience etc.
3	<b>Interpretation</b>	Interpretation of what was observed and incidents that happened on the tour and/or direct description of feelings about what was observed/happened.



# Reflective learning level descriptors

Level	Descriptors	Indicators
4	<b>Relational interpretation</b>	Interpretation of what was observed and happened on the tour, but with evidence that the interpretation is based on other information, understanding, knowledge, experience etc. not in the tour.
5	<b>Abstraction and generalization</b>	Abstraction and generalization of meaning generated through interpretation of observations and incidents on the tour.



# Reflective learning level descriptors

Level	Descriptors	Indicators
6	<b>Resolution</b>	States a resolution, decision or an action to take, stimulated by observations and incidents during the tour.
7	<b>Extended resolution</b>	Deduction of a general principle from the resolution or decision. The principle moves beyond the observations/incidents that took place during the tour and becomes a rule for one's life.



# Reflective learning sample quotes

Level	Descriptors	Sample quotes
1	<b>Description</b>	<p>There is nothing in their house. (Ka Po – S01)</p> <p>I saw many flies. (Mei Ling – S09)</p> <p>[The house had] only simple furniture, very dim light, and only a ball. (Ming Yin – S16)</p>
2	<b>Relational description</b>	<p>Today I stayed with the host family. I thought of Hong Kong when I was helping to make a fire with wood. (Wai Yan – S26)</p> <p>I saw the kids wearing worn-down shoes, but I ... have a lot of shoes in Hong Kong. (Sin Ying – S27)</p> <p>... I can get close to rural people living in the mountain region, something which I have never experienced before. (Wai Mei – S23)</p>



# Reflective learning sample quotes

Level	Descriptors	Sample quotes
3	<b>Interpretation</b>	<p>The sponsored boy was not so poor; at least they [his family] had a television and an electric lamp. However, another family that we visited had only an electric lamp. (Ka Ling – S17)</p> <p>When I taught, I realized that the rural kids were lacking in knowledge. (Yick Ling – S19)</p> <p>I felt curious and [had] fun the first time when I did morning exercise. (Tak Man – S22)</p>



# Reflective learning sample quotes

Level	Descriptors	Sample quotes
4	<b>Relational interpretation</b>	<p>I felt that the curriculum these students were having was not as advanced as that in Hong Kong. Also, they seldom have English [lessons]. (Yim Chi – S13)</p> <p>The students continued to practise writing the alphabet and pronouncing new words during the recess. They were hard-working and eager to learn. Hong Kong students should learn from them. (Ping – S14)</p> <p>Our living [standard] is far better than theirs. Their lives are so simple. (Long Ho – S10)</p>



# Reflective learning sample quotes

Level	Descriptors	Sample quotes
5	<b>Abstraction and generalization</b>	<p>This trip gave me a deep understanding that satisfaction in the heart is more important than the material life. (Ping – S14)</p> <p>The blessings Hong Kong people have may be a curse in itself. (Ming Yin – S16)</p>
6	<b>Resolution</b>	<p>... I have to treasure my learning opportunities and the chances for learning English. (Ka Ling – S17)</p> <p>We are so blessed that we have to try our best to help those in need, and treasure what we have now. (Wai Tak – S25)</p>



# Reflective learning sample quotes

Level	Descriptors	Sample quotes
7	<b>Extended resolution</b>	<p>Diligence and effort will pay off. Diligence leads to progress. People doing nothing and trying nothing shall regret this. (Ka Sin – S08)</p> <p>I should become more open, confident, considerate and tolerant, so that I can learn more. (Ping – S14)</p>



## Reflective learning sample quotes

- Sham Hoi Keung and his brother were diligent in their studies (**Level 3 – Interpretation**)... I have to learn from them. (**Level 6 – Resolution**) Diligence and effort will pay off. Diligence leads to progress. People doing nothing and trying nothing shall regret this. (**Level 7 - Extended Resolution**)

Ka Sin (S08)



## Reflective learning sample quotes

- ...I am very blessed, but I do not feel satisfied. I concentrate too much on material life. (**Level 4 – Relational Interpretation**) I have to concentrate more on satisfaction in the heart. (**Level 6 – Resolution**) I should become more open, confident, considerate and tolerant, so that I can learn more. (**Level 7 – Extended Resolution**)

Ping (S14)





# Conclusion

- The hierarchical structure of the Reflective Learning Taxonomy provides a useful framework for educators and youth workers for
  - **setting objectives** for tours
  - measuring the **qualitative differences in reflection** on experience as a means of learning



# Conclusion

- **assess the feedback** from participants
- outline clearly the group members' **paths to learning**
- **evaluate educational value** of the service learning programme.





# Question and Answer