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Shadowing: The Case for Implementing Evaluative Practices

Craig LANGFORD*

Abstract

This paper provides an overview of reflection as an activity which helps learners make better sense of their learning experiences. Models of reflective learning and frameworks to promote evaluative practices in the classroom are presented, and it is suggested that reflection and evaluative practices should be incorporated into shadowing procedures. This paper is relevant to instructors interested in integrating opportunities for collaborative critical reflection into language learning courses.

I. Introduction

Reflection has been identified as a key component of the learning process by many educational researchers. Dewey (1933) defines reflection as 'an active, persistent and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it and the further conclusions to which it tends' (118). For Dewey (1933), reflection is a catalyst for learning that connects prior knowledge with new knowledge and incites new understandings. It has several stages, moving from uncertainty due to encountering an unfamiliar problem, to developing an action plan to tackle it (Dewey, 1973). Connecting prior knowledge to new knowledge in this way is a condition of learning, as Barnes (1976) explains: 'To learn is to develop relationships between what the learner knows already and the new system presented to him, and this can only be done by the learner himself (81). Although Barnes does not refer to reflection in explicit terms, connecting prior and new knowledge involves the process of reflecting upon and connecting what is known with what is newly understood. Boud et al (1985) add an emotional and

^{*} Instructor of English as a Foreign Language, School of Biological and Environmental Sciences, Kwansei Gakuin University

social aspect to reflection, and define reflection in generic terms with regard to 'those intellectual and affective activities in which individuals engage to explore their experiences in order to lead to a new understanding and appreciation. It may take place in isolation or in association with others' (19). According to Boud et al (1985), reflection is necessary not only for learners to make sense of what they have learned but also to develop new understandings of how they have learned. It can be an independent or an interdependent activity, but in either case, it must be carried out by the learner herself. As such, it is an active and engaging task because the learner takes control of the process (Hammond and Collins, 1991) and makes sense of her learning experience in both intellectual and emotional terms. Bruner (1996) defines reflection in broader terms as a way of 'making what you learn make sense, understanding it' (87), an understanding which is achieved through the act of interpretation. Bruner (1996) states that the objective of reflection 'is understanding, not explanation; its instrument is the analysis of text' (90). For Bruner, reflection is an act of interpretation that permits the learner to reach a deeper level of understanding. These definitions of reflection from prominent educational researchers have three points in common: (a) reflection involves analysis and interpretation of experience which is bound to a specific context; (b) the act of reflection connects old and new knowledge leading to new understandings; (c) the act of reflection is carried out by the learner herself. Additionally, reflection may also be prompted by 'others', involve feelings (Boud et al, 1985) and lead to the development of new goals (Dewey, 1973).

II. Reflection and Second Language Acquisition

1. Implementing Reflection and Evaluative Practices

Reflection has also been characterized in terms relevant to the language learner, often as a way to enhance the depth of their learning experience through the writing of journals, learner diaries and other forms of self-evaluation—a process which can lead to the establishment of new learning goals. Dam (2000) encourages educators to make all aspects of the learning process open to reflection and evaluation, beginning with self-evaluation of a learner's work and progress. Other forms of evaluation can then be used, such as oral peer evaluations, or written evaluations. The evaluation process is seen as a tool for raising awareness of learning issues, monitoring progress, reflecting on the outcome of the learning experience and 'planning ahead' (Dam, 2000: 51) by creating new learning objectives. Ellis (2000) advocates a process-oriented methodology to develop metacognitive awareness in learners so that they can transfer newly learned skills from one task to another. Her methodology consists of three stages, beginning with the first stage of 'reflection'

on previous learning to create new learning objectives and tasks, then trialing the tasks in a second 'experimentation' stage and finally doing extended activities in a 'review' stage (Ellis, 2000: 77). Ellis' (2000) three stage methodology reflects the 'ongoing cyclical nature of learning' and provides a systematic way to reflect on learning that Ellis says is often neglected in the classroom (76). Vieira (2003) argues that reflection is a pedagogical principle which should be incorporated into language learning lessons to foster deeper engagement with content and the learning process. Vieira (2003) connects reflection with the development of language awareness (such as formal and pragmatic properties) and learning awareness (such as metacognitive strategies and setting objectives). James and Pedder (2006) similarly argue that learners should 'individually or collaboratively, develop the motivation to reflect on their previous learning and identify objectives for new learning' and that doing so will bring learners closer to 'the heart of teaching and learning processes' (28). For Vieira (2003) and James and Pedder (2006), reflection entails the development of critical thinking skills as learners evaluate learning experiences and progress to create new goals, a process which ensures consistent and active involvement in learning activities. Dam and Legenhausen (2011) highlight the factors involved in the evaluation process and the interrelationships between 'reflection, evaluation, assessment and decision-making' in their research on learner autonomy (180). In their model of the factors pertinent to 'evaluative practices' (see Figure 1), all aspects of the learning context are open to learner reflection and the educator should highlight relevant aspects to facilitate reflection (179). Dam and Legenhausen (2011) distinguish between the different aspects of reflection, evaluation and assessment, with reflection directing an affective response while evaluation and assessment direct a cognitive response which hinges on the learner forming an opinion about the experience and 'to consider 'why' they have reached this opinion' (181). Assessment requires some quantitative measure of the outcome of a task such as a score (whether from the learner or teacher) and carrying out assessment in conjunction with evaluation ensures that learners develop a greater insight into their strengths and weaknesses. Decision-making is the setting of concrete objectives to address weaknesses that have come to the fore through the process of reflection, evaluation and assessment. The model proffered by Dam and Legenhausen (2011) ensures that learners maintain an active and ongoing role in reflecting on and evaluating their experience and provides learners with a greater sense of progress.

Dornyei and Ushioda (2011) provide a framework for motivational teaching practice with four interlinked stages of creating basic motivational conditions: generating motivation; maintaining motivation; protecting motivation; and encouraging positive retrospective self-evaluation. Dornyei and Ushioda's (2011)

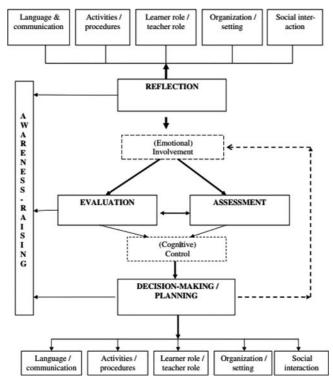


Figure 1 Dam and Legenhausen's (2011) Model of Factors to be Included in Evaluative Practices

Note. From "Explicit Reflection, Evaluation, and Assessment in the Autonomy Classroom," by L. Dam and
L. Legenhausen, 2011, Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching, 5(2), p.179

construct of 'self-evaluation' is similar to Dam and Legenhausen's (2011) in that both involve reflecting on and forming an opinion about the learning experience. Learners are to be encouraged to connect successes and failures to the efforts they have made, to understand progress as relative to accomplishing their goals, and to reflect on what they should do to maintain progress (Dornyei and Ushioda, 2011). They also argue that evaluation should be positive and provide learners with a sense of satisfaction to preserve motivation and support the making of new goals. Dornyei and Ushioda (2011) make the case for self-evaluation of success and progress taking precedence over the indexing of success through grading, though they admit that students themselves may ascribe greater importance to the grade they receive. Kohonen (2007) draws on Kolb's (1984) four-stage cycle of experiential learning in which the initial concrete experience is subject to reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. Kohonen (2007) explains that in experiential learning, concrete experiences are subject to analysis through the use of 'thoughts, feelings and judgement' (4) and the reframing of experiences through the application of different perspectives (see Figure 2). Abstract conceptualization subsequently continues the act of reflection but with a more rigorous and intellectual

analysis of phenomena through the 'definition and classification of abstract ideas and concepts' (4). Finally, in active experimentation, the learner applies what they have learned to real life. The learner has an active role in the cycle because the learner grasps experience intuitively (through concrete experience) and consciously (through abstract conceptualization), and is able to transform their experience through the acts of reflective observation (thinking) and active experimentation (doing). Reflection in Kohonen's (2007) interpretation of the experiential cycle of learning is similar to the construct of reflection in Dam and Legenhausen's (2011) model because there is an emotional component that is an integral part of the learning experience. For Dam and Legenhausen (2011), learners need to be emotionally invested in their learning and they must be afforded the opportunity to reflect meaningfully on those emotional factors and constraints that may have affected the learning process. Kohonen (2007) argues that learners must experience theoretical concepts for themselves at a meaningful 'emotional level' while engaged in learning activities (4). Only then can their learning experience be subject to reflection and abstract conceptualization. According to Kohonen (2007) and Dam and Legenhausen (2011), reflection is a step towards the cognitive act of evaluation, a bridge 'between experience and theoretical conceptualization' (Kohonen, 2007: 4).

2. The Validity of Learner Reflection and Self-Assessment

Researchers in the field of second language acquisition have emphasized the contextual, individual and affective factors involved in learner reflection. Some of the key aspects of reflection have been summarized by Benson (2011) thus: it is cyclical; it is contextual; it is initiated by the learner or provoked by a particular circumstance or problem; it is a mental process involving feelings and judgment that

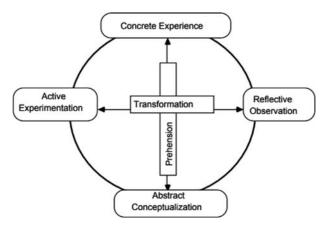


Figure 2 Kolb's Model of Experiential Learning (as cited in Kohonen, 2007)

Note. From "Learning to Learn Through Reflection — An Experiential Learning Perspective," by V. Kohonen, 2007, University of Tampere, p.3

may lead to action or change in the learner; it is necessary to evaluate the process and outcome of the learning process; and it can be 'retrospective, introspective or prospective' (106).

Benson (2011) also notes that, the distinction between self-assessment and selfmonitoring is a blurred one because self-assessment is 'ongoing and influences planning' and includes 'reflection on goals, learning activities and appropriate assessment criteria' (106). If reflection on learning is important, then it is also important that self-assessment and the setting of new goals be part of that process. However, research shows that learners may struggle to make an accurate assessment of their own performance and set achievable goals without adequate expert support. Little (1991) for example, argues that the language learner needs to 'reflect critically on the learning process, evaluate his progress, and if necessary make adjustments to his learning strategies' (52) but acknowledges that learners tend to make general judgments about learning and that few can identify or evaluate the effectiveness of their learning strategies. Thomson (1996) implemented a project of self-directed learning where learners were responsible for planning, monitoring and reviewing their progress. The review stage was carried out with a self-rating assessment, and Thomson (1996) found that cultural heritage and gender largely determined whether learners provided high or low self-ratings. Dlaska and Krekeler (2008) found that even advanced learners made mistakes with self-assessment of pronunciation skills. Learners were able to identify 90% of correct sounds but only 44% of their incorrect sound. Despite the inaccuracies of the learners' self-assessments, Dlaska and Krekeler (2008) emphasize the positive learning factors associated with implementing self-assessment such as raised awareness of performance, increased motivation and encouraging learners to make decisions for themselves.

There is therefore an important role for the educator in supporting learner self-assessment and ensuring it is reliable and accurate. Little (1991) argues that critical reflection requires both 'effort and expert guidance' (52) and Dlaska and Krekeler (2008) note that training with pronunciation practice would enhance the reliability of learners' self-assessment. Dam (2000) suggests directing self-evaluation of learning outcomes towards 'linguistic competence, own performance, social behavior and responsibility' (50). Open evaluations can be replaced with specific questions to develop learners' own insights into the learning process. Ellis (2000) suggests that educators develop learners' skills at critical reflection by asking them probing questions until the learner can provide 'a conscious statement of what they have done and how they have done it' (85) and by providing models of reflection. Dam and Legenhausen (2011) similarly argue that the educator should provide models of self-assessment so that learners can develop the skills necessary to accurately assess their own performance. To test the validity of learners' self-assessment, Dam and

Legenhausen (2011) administered an external C-test of reading and writing abilities and compared it with learners own self-assessment of ability on a scale of 1-10 and a teacher's assessment. The three measures were 'almost identical' showing that learner judgments were valid. Dam and Legenhausen (2011) argue that the skills developed in self-assessment are transferable to peer assessment. With expert support, research suggests that learners can reflect critically and form reliable judgments about the outcome of their learning.

3. Instruments that Facilitate Reflection and Evaluation

Researchers have suggested a range of instruments and approaches to encourage reflection and facilitate evaluation. Hammond and Collins (1971) advance the theory that the act of 'writing promotes reflection' and that a diary, journal or portfolio can be used to record personal insights and reactions to the learning experience (171). Verbal reports and discussion may also be used, but Hammond and Collins (1971) warn that 'reflection may remain superficial and descriptive' and is also potentially face-threatening (172). It is therefore important for the educator to create conditions so that learners feel secure enough to share their learning experiences and reflect on them with others. One way to do this is to follow a discourse-based approach utilizing group learner conversations. Esch (1997) established a weekly learner training workshop which focused on language learning and sharing learning experiences. The workshop followed a discourse-based approach whereby learners publicly reflected on their previous week's experience, and the group as a whole provided collective feedback. This conversational approach was 'non-threatening' and Esch (1997) posits that intervals between each experience and reflection increased the quality of feedback (173). Smith (2000) advocates a similar collaborative discourse-based approach. Working as an instructor at a Japanese university, Smith was able to take advantage of the freedom of course design which extends to evaluative practices. Smith (2000) developed a 'Learner to Learner' network where learners engaged in peer-counselling about language learning strategies, their ideas about learning, the resources they utilized and their emotional experiences (98). Learners were encouraged to set goals and work both independently and interdependently to achieve them (Smith, 2000). Dam (2000) argues for a range of tools for evaluation to be used by learners, such as oral and written individual evaluations or group oral and written evaluations. Deploying a range of tools in the way Dam (2000) describes (rather than just assessment tests) will ensure that different aspects of evaluation can be covered (Nicolaides, 2008).

4. Reflection and Self-Assessment in Shadowing

Shadowing has been defined as 'an active and highly cognitive activity in

which learners track speech they hear and vocalize it as clearly as possible while simultaneously listening' (Tamai, 1997 as cited by Hamada, 2014: 3). Research has shown that shadowing can help low proficiency listeners develop the bottom-up listening skills of phoneme perception and word recognition that they lack (Hamada, 2017). Self-assessment of shadowing performance has been the subject of several major studies carried out by Japanese researchers. The first investigated whether comprehension questions or a dictation cloze was best suited as a form of selfassessment after completing shadowing training (Hamada, 2011 c). Results indicated that top-down comprehension questions maintained learner interest rather more than a bottom-up partial dictation cloze. The latter task may have felt repetitive to learners because shadowing itself is a bottom-up listening activity. A further study focused on the efficacy of self-monitoring versus pair-monitoring of shadowing performance amongst Japanese university students (Nakayama and Suzuki, 2012). For self-monitoring, learners used an IC recorder and a script to check their shadowing performance, and they were able to play the recording several times. For pair-monitoring, one learner listened while the other carried out the shadowing task and checked for errors using a script. Nakayama and Suzuki's (2012) study showed that self-monitoring led to a greater improvement in performance as indicated by an increased reproduction rate. Nakayama and Suzuki (2012) theorize that as well as being able to replay the audio recording multiple times to check for errors, selfmonitoring led to improved performance because learners were not subject to intrusive monitoring from another person. A follow-up study researched whether self -monitoring or pair-monitoring would improve phoneme perception and listening skills (Hamada, 2015 a). The learners carried out multiple stages of the shadowing process, and then learners in the self-monitoring group recorded their shadowing performance and checked it with a script while the learners in the pair-monitoring group listened and checked each other's shadowing performance with a script. Results indicated that only the lower proficiency listeners belonging to the selfmonitoring group improved their comprehension skills, and that their reflective comments had a greater level of criticality. Learners in the self-monitoring group were able to explain 'why their shadowing training sometimes failed' (Hamada, 2017: 79) while reflective comments made by learners in the pair-monitoring group were superficial in comparison. This may be because learners belonging to the pairmonitoring group could only base their reflection on the errors that had been noticed and made apparent by their partner (Hamada, 2017). Research suggests that selfassessment of shadowing performance should be incorporated as a follow-up activity, and that learners require effective support from the educator in order to make reliable judgments of their own performance.

Dam and Legenhausen (2011) argue that evaluative practices of 'reflection

evaluation and assessment, should be daily integrated parts of the teaching / learning process in any learning environment' (177). However, the six step procedure for shadowing advocated by Kadota and Tamai (2004) crucially neglects such evaluative practices. Hamada (2017) favors modifying this basic shadowing procedure to add an active 'self-reflective activity' such as a comprehension quiz so that learners have the opportunity to evaluate their own improvement (89). The use of other additional evaluative instruments besides a basic assessment test would ensure that reflection is carried out with greater criticality (Nicolaides, 2008). Smith (2000), for example, designed a student-directed learning course at a Japanese university which incorporated 10 minutes for guided self-reflection at the end of each class which prompted a greater sense of learner engagement, a deepening awareness of progress and an increased capacity to set clear goals. In addition to simple forms of self-assessment such as checking a script or completing a comprehension quiz, shadowing procedures need to be modified to foster greater critical reflection on learner experience. A discourse-based approach utilizing group learner conversations in an online forum is one way to accomplish this.

5. Reflection Online

Research into online forums shows that a discourse-based approach can generate useful reflective conversations amongst learners. Colomb and Simutis' (1996) study describes a community of academic inquiry where problems and questions that mattered to the participants were proposed and arguments were tested. The process allowed for the exercise of joint authority and transcripts of synchronous chat were subject to reflection and used as the basis for future academic papers. Lamy and Goodfellow (1999) report on an online forum where learners engaged in reflective conversations to discuss their learning experiences. They note that learners were capable of critically reflecting both on tasks and the wider learning context, and that educators need to support the 'socio-affective needs of the students' as well as 'the raising of subject knowledge' on such forums (Lamy and Goodfellow, 1999: 19). Sun and Chang (2012) researched the use of blogs as a tool to collaboratively reflect on the learning of academic writing skills. Learners showed comprehension of their developing skills, reflected on strategies to cope with problems and shared their feelings and support.

III. Research Question

This paper investigates what kind of activities are suitable to promote meaningful reflection and enable accurate self-assessment for a shadowing course. A survey was carried out to investigate the suitability of an online forum following a

discourse-based approach to create opportunities for collaborative reflection and a partial cloze test with a shadowing script to permit self-assessment and monitoring of shadowing performance.

IV. Method

1. Participants

The participants were 72 Japanese university students enrolled in a communication course in the second grade. The participants English proficiency level was intermediate

2. Materials

Shadowings were taken from the textbook Contemporary Topics 1: 21ST Century Skills for Academic Success. The textbook has listening content including interviews, lectures and discussions which were used for shadowing activities. There were 6 shadowing activities spread over twelve weeks with shadowing carried out in the first week and follow-up activities carried out in the second. Learners submitted two shadowing recordings spaced a day apart as well as a 75 word reflection on their shadowing performance to an online forum. Learners were encouraged to consider factors including those advocated by Dam and Legenhausen (2011) for critical reflection as well as strategies and setting goals. The following week, learners were told to respond to at least 2 classmates on the forum with a 20 word comment and complete a partial dictation cloze of function and unstressed words using a script of the shadowing activity from the previous week. The instructor also posted a general response to 3 learners' comments each week and provided critical feedback which was made available via the forum to the whole class. Learners were encouraged to self-evaluate their shadowing performance with reference to their submitted recordings but were also reminded that improvement is incremental and that they did not need to aim for perfection.

3. Survey

To prepare for this paper, a 30-item survey of 72 second grade learners was carried out at the end of the semester. A 5-point Likert scale was used for the questionnaire with 1 expressing strong disagreement and 5 expressing strong agreement. Questions were made available in English and in Japanese to ensure full comprehension. 43 responses were received. The questionnaire primarily focused on learner views of activities connected to reflection and self-assessment

V. Results and Discussion

In general, the results support the contention that creating the opportunity for reflection, self-evaluation and self-assessment enhances the overall learning experience. Critical reflection coupled with a self-assessment task was valued by the majority of learners. The response to question 1 in Table 1 and Figure 3 shows that

Table 1 Learner Views of Reflection and Self-Assessment of Shadowing With Descriptive Statistics

	Item	Median	Mode
1.	Reflecting on my own shadowing performances helped me to know where I needed to improve	Agree	Strongly agree
2.	Reading other students' reflective comments on shadowing on the shadowing forums was useful	Agree	Strongly agree / Agree
3.	Writing responses to other students' reflective comments on the shadowing forums was useful	Agree	Agree
4.	I tried using some other students' strategies for shadowing that I read on the forum	Agree	Agree
5.	Comments from other students on the forum about my shadowing were useful	Agree	Agree
6.	Comments about shadowing from the teacher were useful	Agree	Strongly agree / Agree
7.	Doing a listening quiz with a script on the previous week's shadowing task was useful	Agree	Agree
8.	I set my own goals for shadowing tasks during the semester	Agree	Agree
9.	I changed my own goals for shadowing tasks during the semester	Agree	Agree

Note. Total N = 43, results shown as descriptive statistics of median and mode.

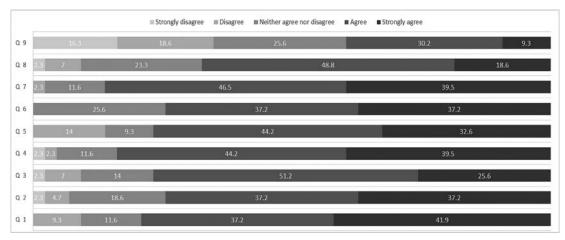


Figure 3 Learner Views of Reflection and Self-Assessment of Shadowing Note. Total N = 43, Likert scale responses to questions 1-9 in Table 1 are shown as percentages

reflection led to self-evaluation (Dam and Legenhausen, 2011) as learners linked their learning experiences to new understandings of areas for improvement. The response to question 7 in Table 1 and Figure 3 shows that self-assessment through the partial cloze activity and checking of the shadowing script was valued as a productive activity. Providing the opportunity for reflection alongside selfassessment is in accordance with Dam and Legenhausen's (2011) model which highlights reflection, evaluation and assessment as integral aspects of awareness raising. Although the positive response to the partial cloze activity runs counter to the results of Hamada (2011 c), it should be noted that learners had already completed a variety of listening activities, including top-down comprehension tasks, so there may have been more positive investment in completing a simple cloze activity as a final form of self-assessment. Evaluation and assessment led to decision making and planning (Dam and Legenhausen, 2011) and the responses to questions 8 and 9 in Table 1 and Figure 3 show that learners did consider and set their own goals. Setting goals develops criticality and enhances the learning process by ensuring an active role for the learner and greater engagement with content (Dam, 2000; Smith, 2000; Kohonen, 2007; Dam and Legenhausen, 2011). As the response to question 9 in Figure 3 shows, fewer learners made the choice to change their goals during the semester, but this may be because some learners required a longer period of time to achieve the goals they had initially set. This is likely to be true for low-proficiency listeners who would need a longer period of time to address their deficits in phoneme perception and word recognition (Rost, 2013).

The results support prior research on the efficacy of creating collaborative opportunities for reflection through a discourse-based approach. Learners utilized strategies recommended by their classmates as the response to question 4 in Table 1 and Figure 3 shows. The finding aligns with Ellis' (2000) research on reflection's role in promoting transference of skills and the importance of conducting reflection at a sufficient interval to permit an objective view of the learning experience to emerge (Esch, 1997). It also aligns with Sun and Chang (2012) which found evidence of *reflection on* and *sharing of* learning strategies on the forum. Learners were positive about interacting on the forum and appreciated reading comments from each other as well as from the teacher (as shown in their responses to questions 2, 3, 5 and 6 in Table 1 and Figure 3). Learners welcomed support and feedback from their classmates and this may have positively impacted their affective response to shadowing (see Lamy and Goodfellow, 1999 and Sun and Chang 2012). The online forum became the kind of learner-to-learner support network to share ideas and strategies in a similar way to that created by Smith (2000).

VI. Limitations

This was an exploratory study, and it has several limitations. There was a limited number of participants and there was no control group, so results may not apply to a wider context. A mixed methods study with semi-structured interviews could provide greater depth of understanding regarding learner views of evaluative practices.

VII. Conclusions

The act of reflection has emerged as a critical idea about teaching and learning (Bruner, 1996). Promoting opportunities for learners to actively reflect on their learning experiences and to evaluate and assess their learning facilitates a greater understanding of their strengths and weaknesses. Collaborative reflection using a discourse-based approach can provide learners with the chance to engage in joint reflection and share strategies and decisions in a positive and supportive environment (Dam, 2000: Smith, 2000; Dam and Legenhausen, 2011; Sun and Chang, 2012). The interdependent processes of reflection, evaluation and assessment outlined by Dam and Legenhausen (2011) lead to decision-making and setting goals. The educator should also participate by asking questions to prompt critical reflection and providing useful feedback (Little, 1991; and see Cowan, 1998). This paper investigated the suitability of an online forum for promoting collaborative and critical reflection on learner experiences, alongside a partial cloze test with a script as a form of self-assessment during a shadowing course. Overall, the study supports previous findings that collaborative reflection and self-assessment enhance the quality of learning and promote greater learner engagement. Consequently, as Hamada (2017) attests, such evaluative practices should be incorporated as an additional stage into the shadowing process.

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