I’ll Think About That Tomorrow—Incorporate Reflection Now!

This editorial’s title begins with famous words uttered by Scarlett O’Hara in the classic movie *Gone With the Wind* (Cukor & Fleming, 1939). She goes on to say, “After all, tomorrow is another day.” You might wonder what *Gone With the Wind* (an appropriate thought for the point of this editorial) has to do with reflection. Let me share my thinking.

How often do we have great intentions of applying something we just learned only to be distracted with the practicalities and urgencies of the day? The numbers are probably too high to count. It isn’t that we don’t want to apply new ideas, at least for me. It is more about finding time to test a new approach, develop some new material, or (you may fill in the blank with your favorite running-out-of-time rationale). We often end educational sessions with the thoughts of initiating a new approach at some time in the future. Even when we diligently follow through and actually do something with what we have learned, we may stumble and delay because we hadn’t thought through some aspect of how this idea could really be used. Further, now we don’t have a group of learners who are familiar with the same new content to explore with whom to discuss our ideas. I have no problem with thinking about something tomorrow, and I want to ensure that our thinking tomorrow builds on a solid basis from today.

As a result of engaging in learning activities, how often do we include reflection as part of the process? Are we allowing for learners to take a concept and then translate it into their own context so they see opportunities and challenges? In Kouzes’ and Posner’s (2016) new book, *Learning Leadership*, this point is made: “By definition learning is about something you don’t already know” (p. 46). If we don’t know something and we all learn in different ways, do we not also need time to process something new? Although they were talking about their research into leadership, the same point about learning applies to almost anything. We wouldn’t teach a psychomotor skill and expect people to be able to perform the skill without time to practice. Why, then, would we expect people to take a new cognitive skill and use it without time to practice, in this case reflect?

What would happen if after each learning spurt we had a few minutes of reflection time? That reflection could be structured around the context of assuming learners could use this information at work. To quote the title of Sinek’s book (2009), *Start With Why*. That could be the first point of reflection. Why would I want to incorporate this new idea at work? Next, I would use my own favorite question of “What If?” (Yoder-Wise, 2014). What if I could do this at work? What would be the reaction, what would be the outcomes?

REFERENCES

Note: In the process of preparing this editorial, I stumbled across an article at JamesClear.com (n.d.). There I learned the Greeks had a name for procrastination: akrasia, which means a weakness of will. In addition, an antonym exists! Enkrateia means self-governance. I doubt that these words will be widely used—in any circles—however, they do reinforce the idea of thinking about and doing it (whatever “it” might be) today. Fiddle dee dee (Cukor & Fleming, 1939) just doesn’t cut it in health care!

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