

Becoming a Doctoral Practitioner

Weekly Notes

Week 1: Beginning the Doctoral Journey, and Week 2: Participating in the Global Classroom

Introduction

In Weeks 1 and 2 you will begin building an intercultural learning environment with your fellow students. Together, you will develop your understanding of the importance of context, including your work setting and that of your fellow students, in shaping learning. You will also begin the process of reflecting on the personal skills and attributes required to successfully complete a doctorate. Working at a doctoral level requires extensive engagement when reading, thinking, analysing, writing, and reflecting; it requires effort but promises real rewards in “becoming” a doctoral practitioner. Beginning in this module, and throughout the programme, you will reflect on your developing skills and attributes as you work towards completion of the programme.

There are three main topics for the first two weeks: intercultural learning, critical reading, and reflection. These are introduced this week but are revisited as central themes throughout the programme.

Intercultural Learning

The readings on intercultural learning encourage you to become aware of different approaches in different higher education systems. Think about how you will apply your learning from these readings towards building an intercultural learning environment. What additional insights can you contribute from your own culture or region? In the Discussion, you are asked to “Share specific information on the origin, structure, and current state of higher education in your country.” This question should draw your attention to the idea that the process by which you select information to share is an *active* process that depends on you, your interpretations and your judgements. Again, the development of awareness of your own thinking and decision making processes is central to the doctoral programme.

Critical Reading

One of the key skills in academic work is critical reading. You may or may not have consciously cultivated this skill in other academic programmes, so treat this week as an opportunity to revisit this skill, or as an introduction. The reading selected is drawn from the Foundation for Critical Thinking website. This site is a rich resource for both critical reading and critical thinking; you will be directed to other resources from this site later in this module. Use the reading to analyse your current critical reading skills

and to set yourself specific goals in further developing these skills. Doctoral-level work requires substantial amounts of reading; hopefully, most of it will be interesting! In order to get the most from your reading, however, it is important to develop the habit of reading purposefully. This is an important skill in your professional work as well.

Reflection

Similarly, reflection is a key component of the EdD. The reading by Wilson (2008) provides an introduction to the importance of reflection in the learning process and in professional practice. As well as giving a brief overview of reflection, Wilson focuses on “reflecting-on-the-future,” which aligns with the goals of this first module, in which you are looking forward to “becoming a doctoral practitioner.” While reading this article you should reflect on the experiences of others who have undertaken similar programmes of study and so draw lessons from their experiences as you think about “becoming a doctoral practitioner” yourself.