

Element 1

Reflection is defined by Appleby (2010) as 'the ability to think critically and creatively' (pp. 8). Reed and Canning (2010, pp. 1) go as far as saying that 'reflecting on practice underpins the work of early years practice'. Reflection is linked closely to Dewey (1910) who first merged the idea of reflection to action and described critical thinking as a reflective thought in practice. Schön (1987) considers two types of reflection: Reflection in action and reflection on action. Reflection in action is reflecting upon the event at the time and reflection on action is reflecting upon the action after it is over and making changes for the future. Using the understanding of reflection from Schön and Dewey, many theorists have developed their own models of reflection in order to visualise the process of reflection for practitioners. Rolfe, Freshwater, & Jasper (2001) uses the model 'What? So what? Now what?' to encourage reflection and ensure a plan moving forward. Gibbs (1988) follows a systematic model looking at feelings as well as the event that occurred. These two models both have advantages and disadvantages when used in practices as well as similarities which will be explored throughout.

Rolfe, Freshwater, & Jasper (2001) argues that their reflective model asks 3 stages of questions that then lead the practitioner to critically reflect on their practice effectively. Chen et al. (2011) also argues that reflective practice requires guidance especially when the practitioner is new to the idea of reflection; the questions suggested by Rolfe, Freshwater, & Jasper (2001) model would appear to support this notion. The idea of answering questions in a written format is believed to trigger and prompt reflection and, in turn, teach the practitioner (Davis, 2006). Practitioners who are required to answer questions often feel prompted to look at aspects of reflection that they had not thought of and see things from a different point of view (Moussa-Inaty, 2015). Whilst Rolfe et al. (2001) reflective model uses questions as opposed to Gibbs (1988) model, they are still limited. Higgins, Aitken-Rose, and Dixon (2009) note that effective reflective practice requires an interrogation into the experience which may not happen if the model is not used effectively.

In contrast, Gibbs (1988) model of reflection uses a systematic approach that the practitioner follows; this enables practitioners to complete the reflection in the moment rather than having to make time to write it down (Quinn, 1998). Rolfe, Freshwater, &

Jasper (2001) reflective model encompasses simple questions that then need to be explored in depth which means that may not be easily memorised and done in the moment; therefore, Schön (1981) notion of reflection in action may not be possible following this approach. Lindon (2012) highlights the importance of being able to reflect in the moment suggesting that being able to reflect about what could happen allows for the practitioner to be aware of potential consequences beforehand. However, it could be suggested that written self-reflections are an important part of reflection that can then be shared and reflected upon on more than one occasion (Gummesson and Nordmark, 2012) meaning that being able to reflect in action is not always useful therefore Rolfe, Freshwater, & Jasper(2001) model could still be used.

Rolfe, Freshwater, & Jasper(2001) suggest that reflection is not just the idea of reporting an event and describing it as it happened, but using it to understand how to develop yourself as a practitioner; they argue that Gibbs (1988) model of reflection is more of a descriptive journal rather than a critical reflection. However, the process of reflection can often stem from the description and then lead on to reflection focusing on feelings to create an evaluation of the experience (McGill and Beaty, 2001). Gibbs (1988) model encourages the practitioner to use their feelings when reflecting; Demasio & Carvalho (2013) supports the idea that emotions cannot be separated from rational thought, therefore it must be considered when reflecting. Emotions can also be a good way to ensure that reflection is done as negative feelings encourage practitioners to ensure that it does not happen in the future (Vince, 2006). Despite these understandings, Goleman (1995) maintained the premise that emotions come before rational thought which may not be beneficial for practitioners all the time. When reflecting in action, going off emotion could cause consequences that could have been prevented if they were to apply rational thinking before acting. This idea supports that of Boyd and Fales (1983) who suggested that emotions and personal perceptions of themselves can act as a barrier when critically reflecting as practitioners may not wish to explore negative areas. It could be suggested that using feelings, as suggested by Gibbs (1988) is beneficial providing it is done on action rather than acting on emotions in action.

With both models, the reflection is based on the individual completing it without outside input (Jasper, 2013); this could be a hinderance if the practitioner does not see the problem in their own practice, they will not be able to reflect on issues where as others

would (Liston, 1996). Mezirow (2000) maintains that reflections including other practitioners allow the sharing of ideas and experiences that will help all parties involved. Chen et al. (2011) points out that effective reflective progress requires input and guidance by mentors or practitioners in a higher role which requires reflection to be shared with others. In contrast, Kabat-Zinn (1994) emphasises that reflection is the process of self-enquiry which means practitioners must listen to their own mind and feelings, not those of others. Loughran (2002) considers the possibility that reflection cannot be monitored if it is not shared with mentors and practitioners may not be effectively using the model to reflect on their practice, but the practice of those around them.

From these arguments provided, Rolfe, Freshwater, & Jasper (2001) and Gibbs (1988) provide reflection models that are effective in practice if used correctly and frequently. Both models provide practitioners with different methods of reflection; Gibbs (1988) model can be used to reflect in action when needed, whereas Rolfe, Freshwater, & Jasper (2001) reflective model is best utilised when written down and each question explored in depth. However, it is equally important to argue that both these models have limitations including the fact that they do not necessarily need to be shared with mentors or higher practitioners. With this in mind, the models should be chosen according to the practitioner's preference and which one will be most beneficial to them and their practice.