



Prifysgol Cymru
Y Drindod Dewi Sant
University of Wales
Trinity Saint David

Communication Reflection

Trawsnewid Addysg; Trawsnewid Bywydau
Transforming Education; Transforming Lives



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What is Reflection?

‘Reflection is an important human activity in which people recapture their experience, think about it, mull it over and evaluate it. It is this working with experience that is important in learning. The capacity to reflect is developed to different stages in different people and it may well be this ability which characterises those who learn effectively from experience.’
(Boud, Keogh & Walker 1985:19)

Develop ‘ Culture of thoughtfulness’ (Gibbs & Gambrill 1999) – competent practitioners and workplaces

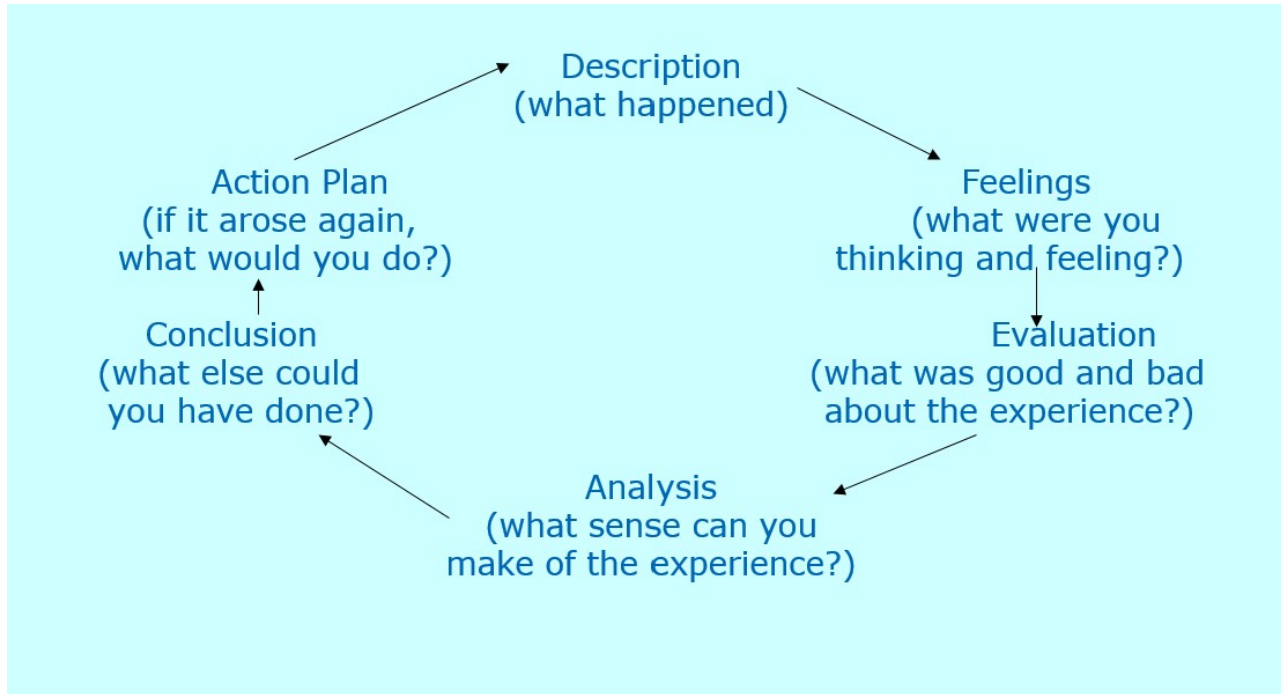
Another View of Reflection

- Harry stared at the stone basin. The contents had returned to their original silvery white state, swirling and rippling beneath his gaze.
- ‘What is it?’ Harry asked shakily.
- ‘This? It is called a pensieve’, said Dumbledore. ‘I sometimes find, and I am sure that you know the feeling, that I simply have too many thoughts and memories crammed into my mind.’
- ‘Er,’ said Harry, who couldn’t truthfully say that he had ever felt anything of the sort.
- ‘At these times,’ said Dumbledore, indicating the stone basin, ‘I use the pensieve. One simply siphons the excess thoughts from one’s mind, pours them into the basin, and examines them at one’s leisure. It becomes easier to spot patterns and links, you understand, when they are in this form.’

From Reaction to Reflective Practice

- Place of reflection & reflective writing in health and social care:
- Progression from description of events to reflective practice (Moon 2004)
- Reflection as higher order thinking (Biggs 1988)
- Established use of diaries/reflective logs to aid reflection (Boud, Keogh & Walker 1985)
- Use of models as aid to structure reflective practice, e.g. Gibbs (1998)

Gibbs' Reflective Cycle (1988 adaptation of Kolb)



Overview

- ✓ What is reflective writing?
- ✓ Have you undertaken reflective writing before?
- ✓ What reflective writing activities have you undertaken?
- ✓ Have you got any thoughts on reflective writing?

Reflective writing

Reflective writing is

- ✓ Your response to experiences, opinions, events or new information
- ✓ Your response to thoughts and feelings
- ✓ A way of exploring your learning
- ✓ An opportunity to gain self-awareness
- ✓ A way to achieve clarity and better understanding of what you are learning
- ✓ A chance to develop writing skills
- ✓ A way of making meaning out of what you study

Reflective writing is not

- ✓ Just conveying information, instruction or argument
- ✓ Pure description (though there may be descriptive elements)
- ✓ Straightforward decision or judgement (for example, about whether something is right or wrong, good or bad)
- ✓ Simple problem-solving
- ✓ A standard university essay

Aim

- ✓ Reflective activity allows us to learn about ourselves and equips us with the tools to enable us to move forward in a positive way.
- ✓ By engaging in reflection on a regular basis, we continue to learn and develop as we study or work.

For this reason, it is important to view reflection as a continual, ongoing process rather than as an occasional activity.

How is it similar to core academic writing?

- ✓ It requires research and development
- ✓ Depending on the task, it should focus on the question and answer the question
- ✓ It involves critical thinking and analysis
- ✓ The writing should be organised into paragraphs with accurate sentence structure, etc.
- ✓ It requires a formal style
- ✓ The discussion should be clear and coherent

How is it different to core academic writing?

- ✓ It is usually used in specific 'genres' such as critical incidents, journals, etc.
- ✓ It connects with personal feelings and behaviour
- ✓ It includes observation and evaluation
- ✓ It may be quite descriptive and informal
- ✓ The use of the 1st person is appropriate
- ✓ It tends to link theory to practice

Exercise 1

- ✓ Moon (2006) suggests using **free writing** activities to get your ideas flowing. If you find it difficult to get started with reflective writing, try thinking of a topic and write continuously about it for five minutes. Suggestions for topics could include **why you chose this course** and **how you think it will help you to develop in the future**.

It is likely that once you begin writing, you will surprise yourself at how much you do.

- ✓ Spend five minutes free writing topics such as: **Learning, Professional development, Health, Inter-professional work**.

Exercise 2

- ✓ Make a list of three things which you have learned about yourself from the following:
- ✓ your course/ your job
- ✓ a particular experience, such as preparing an essay, giving a presentation etc.

Exercise 3

- ✓ Choose an incident or event at school/at home/at university/at work
- ✓ Get started by describing what happened. Then begin to try to reflect on the events following the stages in Gibbs' model: Feelings, Evaluation, Analysis, Conclusion and Action Plan
- ✓ Make notes for each stage

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