

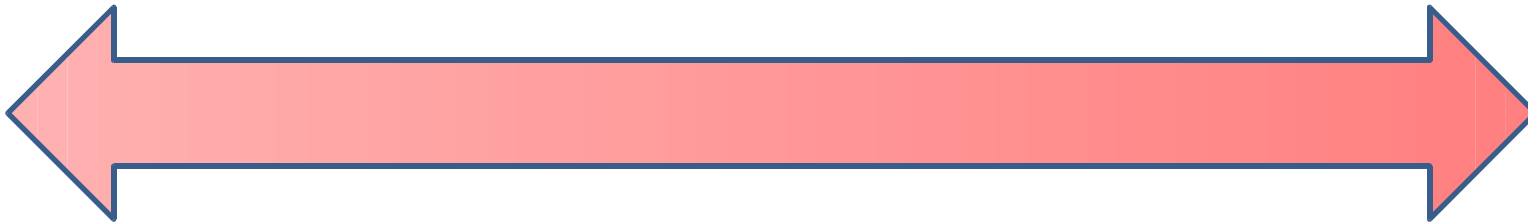
An Introduction to Critical Reflection...



Critical Reflection

Philosophical basis: kritikos – discerning judgement

Uncritical Acceptance / Overcritical Rejection



Reflection defined

“A complex activity aimed at investigating one's own action in a certain situation and involving a review of the experience, an analysis of causes and effects and the drawing of conclusions concerning future action which results in a changed conceptual perspective”

(after Woerkom 2003:40)

One word of warning...

“When ignorance is bliss

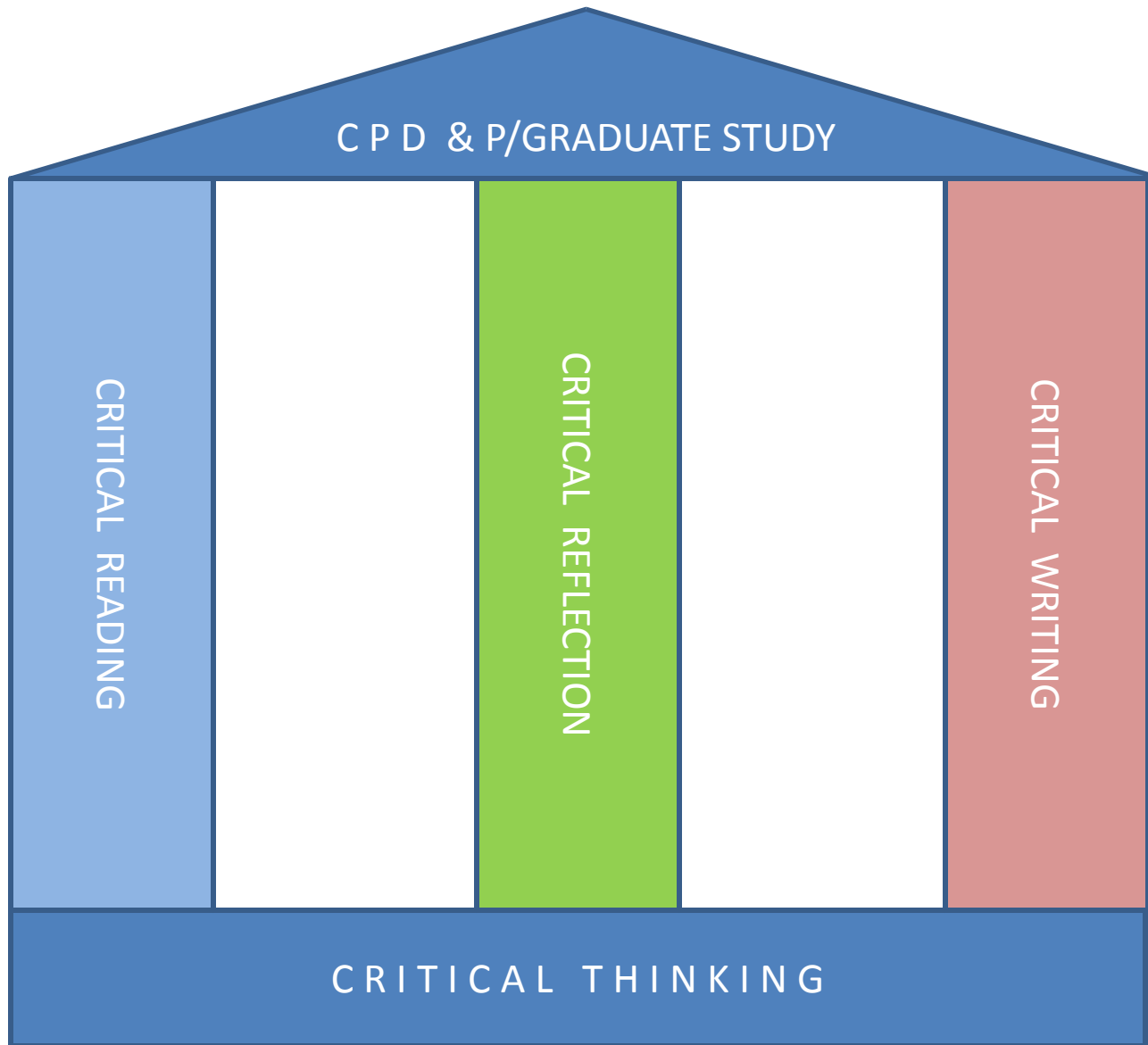
‘Tis folly to be wise”

Thomas Gray

Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College

Some names...

- Dewey
- Kolb
- Boud
- Schon
- Reynolds
- Mezirow
- Woerkom



Evidence through observation

Context

Relevant criteria for making the judgement

Applicable methods/techniques for forming the judgement

Applicable theoretical constructs for understanding the question

common criteria for each element

Critical Reading

Accountants are rarely stressed. At meetings with various accountants over the years I have always found them to be extremely relaxed. Perhaps working with numbers is a soothing occupation. Certainly they seem less stressed than teachers in a large secondary school.

Accountants are rarely stressed. A study by Numero in 1995 found that, of workers observed in 50 different occupations, accountants were seen to be most stress free(1996, p.45). The research involved watching 50 people for one day at their work and noting their moods. At the end of the day each person was given a questionnaire related to stress.

Accountancy appears to be a relatively stress free occupation. Research conducted by Boyd and Benn of Yale university revealed that pressures experienced at work by accountants were the least amongst employees from 80 different occupations. One of the reasons provided for the low stress was the solitary nature of the tasks (1921, p.34).

What is the purpose?

- Has a particular issue or philosophy influenced them?
- Is this acknowledged?
- Are they defending or attacking a particular point of view?
- For who is the work intended?
- How does the work relate to other available literature?

What is the content?

- What is the principal theme/thesis/argument?
- What are the main points to support the argument?
- What evidence is produced to support those points?
- Is evidence well researched and accurate?
- What aspects has the author concentrated on or omitted?
- Is there any evidence of bias or interpretation?
- How do the contents relate to what you know of the topic?

Additionally..

- What could have been done differently?
- What additional points could have been raised?
- What other sources could have been accessed?
- How could this have been structured differently?
- What other conclusions might have been drawn?

One view...

Command is replaced by consent as the key to corporate success which sees the development of employees capable of responding with the minimum of managerial direction...

Advancement comes to depend upon the demonstration of skills that empower, energise and support staff in continuously producing & refining quality products & services.

An alternate view...

(A) systemic trend in capitalism towards the intensification of work which means that managers are driven constantly to find ways to make employees work longer or even harder as a means to maximise labour input & this includes the intensification of both the physical & mental elements of work.

Ramsey et al (2000)

Critical Writing

- What argument am I making?
- Are my claims supported by evidence?
- How credible and appropriate is my evidence?
- Are my conclusions logical and reasonable?
- Have I clarified expressions, claims and meanings of key terms and concepts?
- Have I considered alternative arguments?

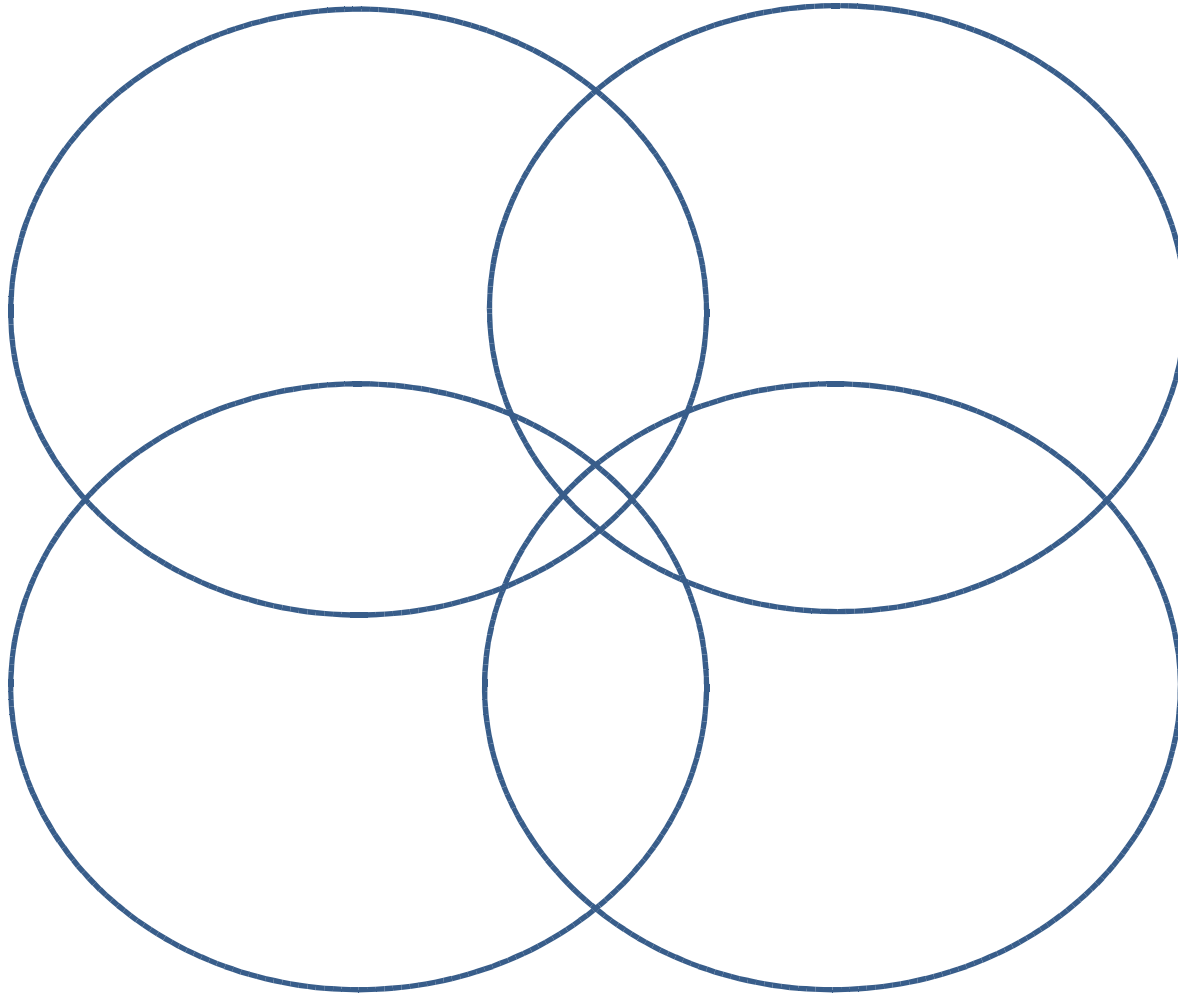
Framing an Argument..

$$A = C + J$$

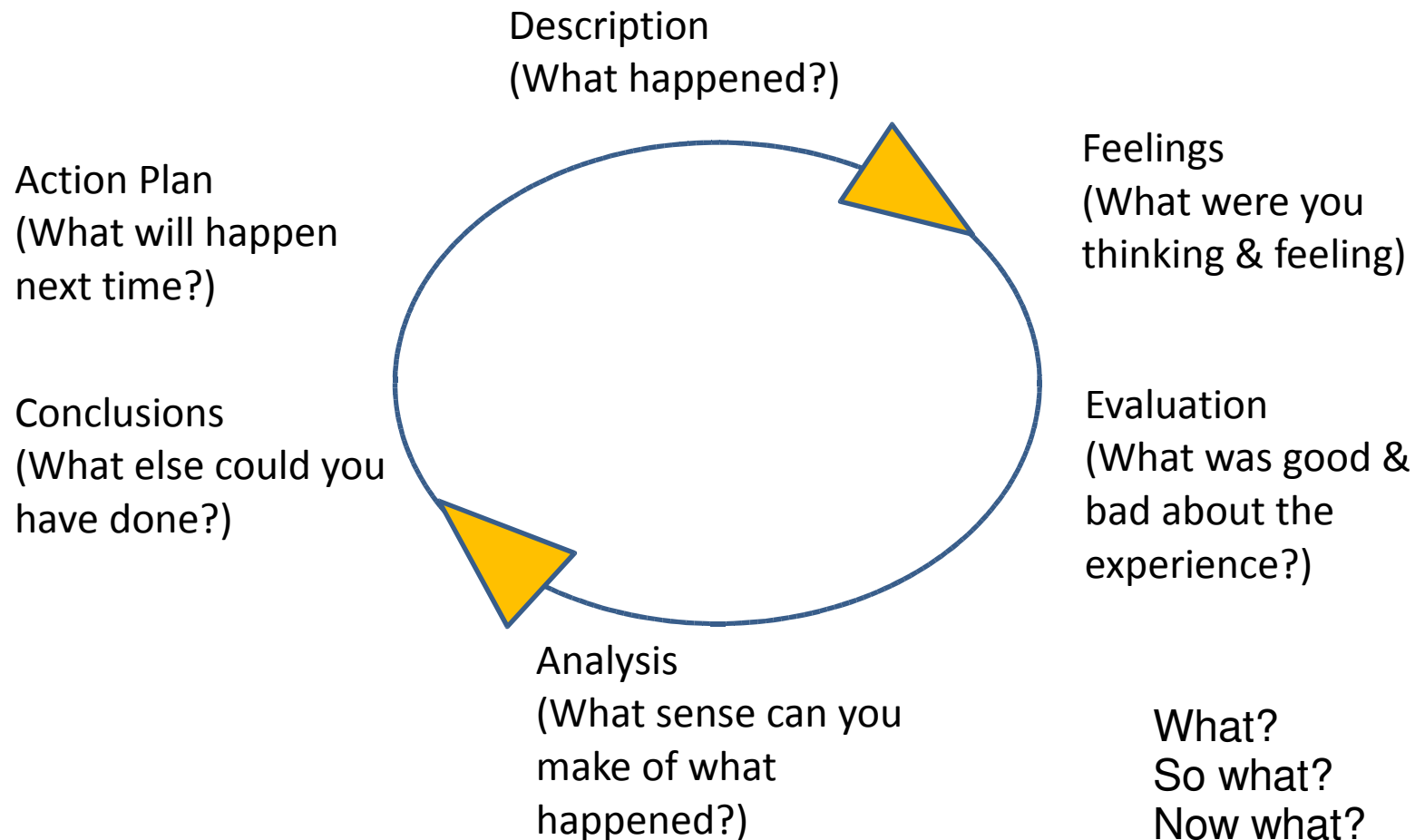
(where A is the argument, C is the claim and J is the justification)

- Chains of reasoning
- Side by side justification
- Pyramid

Bubble Technique



Gibbs' Model of Reflection (1988)



Single loop, double loop & triple loop learning

CONTEXT

FRAMEWORK

ACTIONS

OUTCOMES

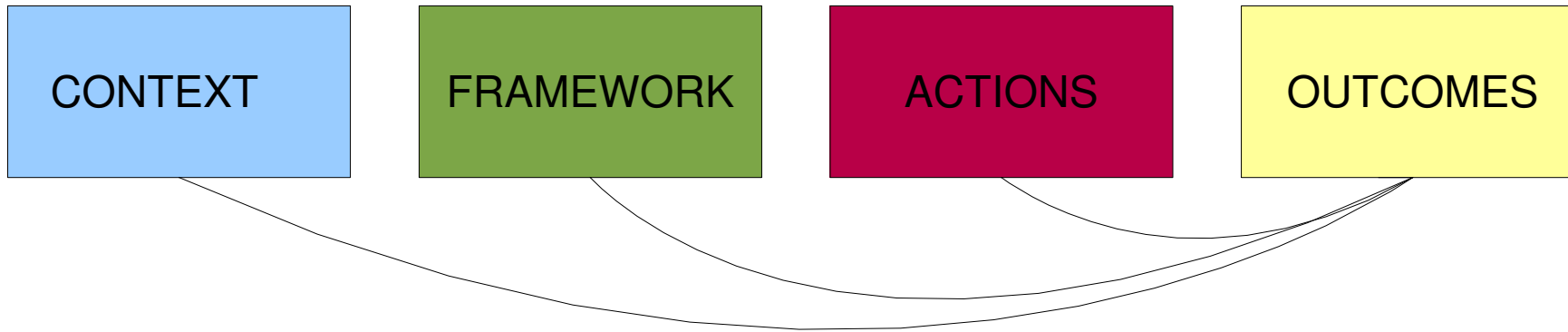
What we do organisationally is based on our history, our habits and our strategies

These shape our work through policies, procedures & constraints

These are the activities, tasks & behaviours that staff undertake

What the world experiences as a result of our organisational actions

Single loop, double loop & triple loop learning



Grade A: Experiencing an event(s) has changed or confirmed, how you experience an event(s). You may wish to change how you respond to similar event(s) in the future. You provide an explanation, including references to other literature, eg articles or books.

Grade B: Involves judgement – what went well, or less well and why.

Grade C: Describing an event – recognising how it affects your feelings, attitudes and beliefs and/or questioning what has been learnt and comparing it to previous experience.

Grade D: Describing an event – recognising that something is important but not explaining why.

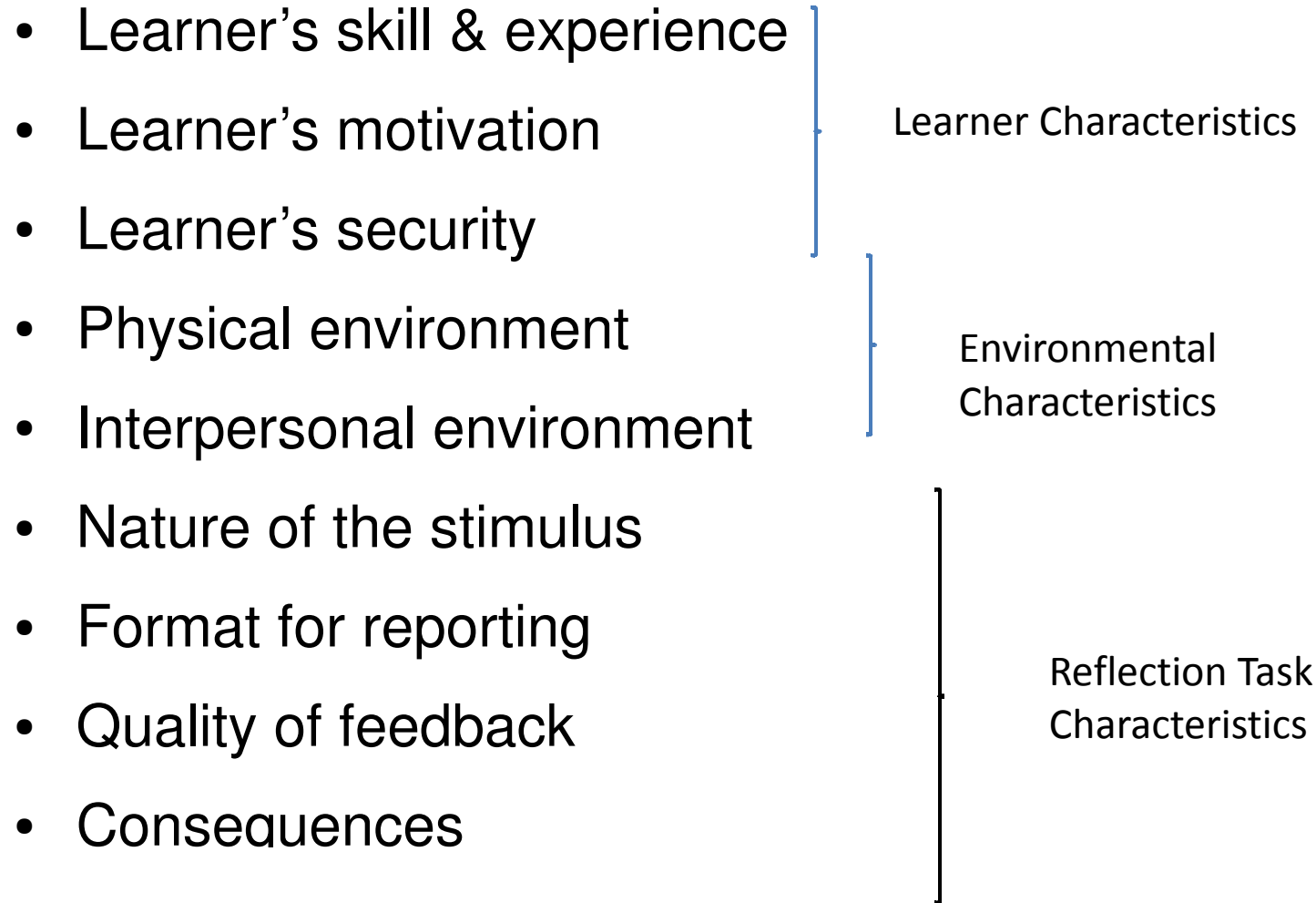
Grade E: Describing an event – repeating the details of an event without offering any interpretation.

Grade F: Describing an event – poor description of an event.

(after Moon 2004)

Inhibitors to Critical Reflection

Gustaffson & Bennett 1995



Knowing (us) your Audience

- Age – old enough!
- Lifestyle – busy!
- Attitudes – fair (concerned only with the argument)
- Sceptical but empathetic
- Knowledge of the field – variable, that's why they ...
- Like - logic, referencing, evidence that you've met the criteria
- Signposting – the bits fit together
- Pet hates – waffle, insufficient justifications, avoidable errors, generalisations, plagiarism
- A belief that – everything should be relevant, conclusions must be warranted

Some concluding thoughts

Reflection as a means of examining experience

Re-experience to note tensions and contradictions

Reflection as a rational, conscious process

It is an individualistic process

Whether to consider the role of emotions or not

The importance of informal vehicles for reflection