



Guidance for Critical Reflections on Practice Development

Critical Reflection on Practice Development

The aim of this section in the journal is to showcase crafted critical reflections on aspects of practice development, innovation and related work as well as summative or evaluative accounts of the experiences of individuals and/or teams involved in this type of work (see section 4.3 of author guidelines).

For the purposes of this journal, critical reflections need to draw on a model of reflection or be structured around a specific model; move beyond simple description; be written in the first person and relate personal learning to broader theory.

Purpose of Critical Reflection

Critical reflection on practice development involves looking back on experience(s) so as to learn from them and gain new or deeper understanding about practice development and/or develop alternative ways of acting when leading and/or facilitating practice development or related activities. It is also about connecting personal learning and ways of knowing with other types of learning and knowledge.

The critical part of the reflection involves in depth examination and questioning of the assumptions and perspectives that are embedded in actions, the origins of those assumptions and perspectives (e.g. personal, social, historical, cultural, political), and the consequences of those assumptions and perspectives for self and others in the context of practice development work. Assumptions and perspectives are reworked in light of current and relevant knowledge (e.g. critical social science, learning theories) and habitual patterns of action are challenged. New ways of working and being may emerge.

Resources to Support the Process of Critical Reflection on Practice Development

A wide variety of resources are available to support the process of critical reflection. A selection is provided below including some staged models, a link to a basic introduction to reflective writing, and a link to a website which provides further resources. A reference list is also offered.

Examples of Staged Models

The models offered here and the stages within them are a guide only and should be used to assist you in moving beyond a descriptive account of an experience to one that involves analysis, learning, and plans for action.

Johns, C. (2000) Guided reflection. In Palmer, A.M., Burns, S. and Bulman, C. (editors) *Reflective Practice in Nursing: The Growth of the Professional Practitioner* (2nd edition). Oxford: Blackwell.

Stage 1: Describe the event/experience

What happened?

Who was involved?

What part did you/others play?

What was the result?

Stage 2: Thinking and feeling

What was significant about this experience to me?

What was I thinking and feeling during the experience?

What was I trying to achieve?

How do I feel about the outcome of the event?

Stage 3: Evaluation

What was good and bad about the experience?

What were the consequences of my action/actions of others?

Stage 4: Analysis

What sense can I make of the situation?

What factors (e.g., values, assumptions, meaning perspective, experiences) influenced my feelings, thoughts, and actions?

What sources of knowledge influenced or should have influenced my actions?

How did others feel and how do I know?

What could I have done differently?

What would be the consequences of those other actions?

Stage 5: Conclusion and action plan

How do I now feel about the experience?

What have I learned about my practice/myself/my organizations?

What would I do now in a similar situation?

What factors might get in the way of me applying my learning from the experience?

Gibbs, G. (1988) *Learning by Doing: A Guide to Teaching and Learning Methods*. Oxford: Further Education Unit.

Gibbs discussed the use of structured debriefing to facilitate the reflection involved in Kolb's "experiential learning cycle". He presents the stages of a full structured debriefing as follows:

Describe

Initial experience

Description

What happened? Don't make judgments yet or try to draw conclusions; simply describe.

Feelings

What were your reactions and feelings? Again don't move on to analysing these yet.

Evaluation

What was good or bad about the experience? Make value judgments.

Analysis

What sense can you make of the situation? Bring in ideas from outside the experience to help you.

What was really going on?

Were different people's experiences similar or different in important ways?

Conclusions (general)

What can be concluded, in a general sense, from these experiences and the analyses you have undertaken?

Conclusions (specific)

What can be concluded about your own specific, unique, personal situation or way of working?

Personal action plans

What are you going to do differently in this type of situation next time?

What steps are you going to take on the basis of what you have learnt?

Rolfe, G., Freshwater, D. and Jasper, M. (2001) *Critical Reflection in Nursing and the Helping Professions: A User's Guide*. Basingstoke. Palgrave Macmillan.

Rolfe's framework for reflective practice can be simplified as:

- What? (Describe the situation)
- So what? (Theory & knowledge building)
- Now what? (How to improve the situation)

Roth, R. A. (1989) Preparing the reflective practitioner: transforming the apprentice through the dialectic. *Journal of Teacher Education*. Vol. 40. No. 2. pp 31-35.

Roth (1989) summarises reflective practice processes as follows:

- Questioning what, why, and how one does things and asking what, why, and how others do things
- Seeking alternatives
- Keeping an open mind
- Comparing and contrasting
- Seeking the framework, theoretical basis, and/or underlying rationale
- Viewing from various perspectives
- Asking "what if...?"
- Asking for others' ideas and viewpoints
- Using prescriptive models only when adapted to the situation
- Considering consequences
- Hypothesising
- Synthesising and testing
- Seeking, identifying, and resolving problems

Other Resources:

- **Reflective writing: a basic introduction**
Shared with kind permission of University of Portsmouth
<http://www.port.ac.uk/departments/student-support/ask-resources/handouts/written-assignments/file-to-download,73259,en.pdf>
- <http://www.supervisionandcoaching.com/>
This website provides a wide variety of resources to support critical reflection

Useful References

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<http://www.fons.org/resources/documents/Journal/IPDJCriticalReflectionResourcesJan2013.pdf> (Lasted accessed INSERT DATE).