

In this journal, we have examined a range of theoretical approaches and practical issues in relation to reflective practice. We began our journey with an exploration of some seminal literature on reflective practice, which encourages us to learn from our professional experience by evaluating it, in order to improve it. We then progressed towards our destination of critically reflective practice by examining the role of feelings in relation to professional practice, followed by a consideration of how we make assumptions and the importance of challenging these in order to practise in a critically reflective way. To do this, the importance of considering our own ethics and values was discussed and the importance of reflecting with others was highlighted as part of this process.

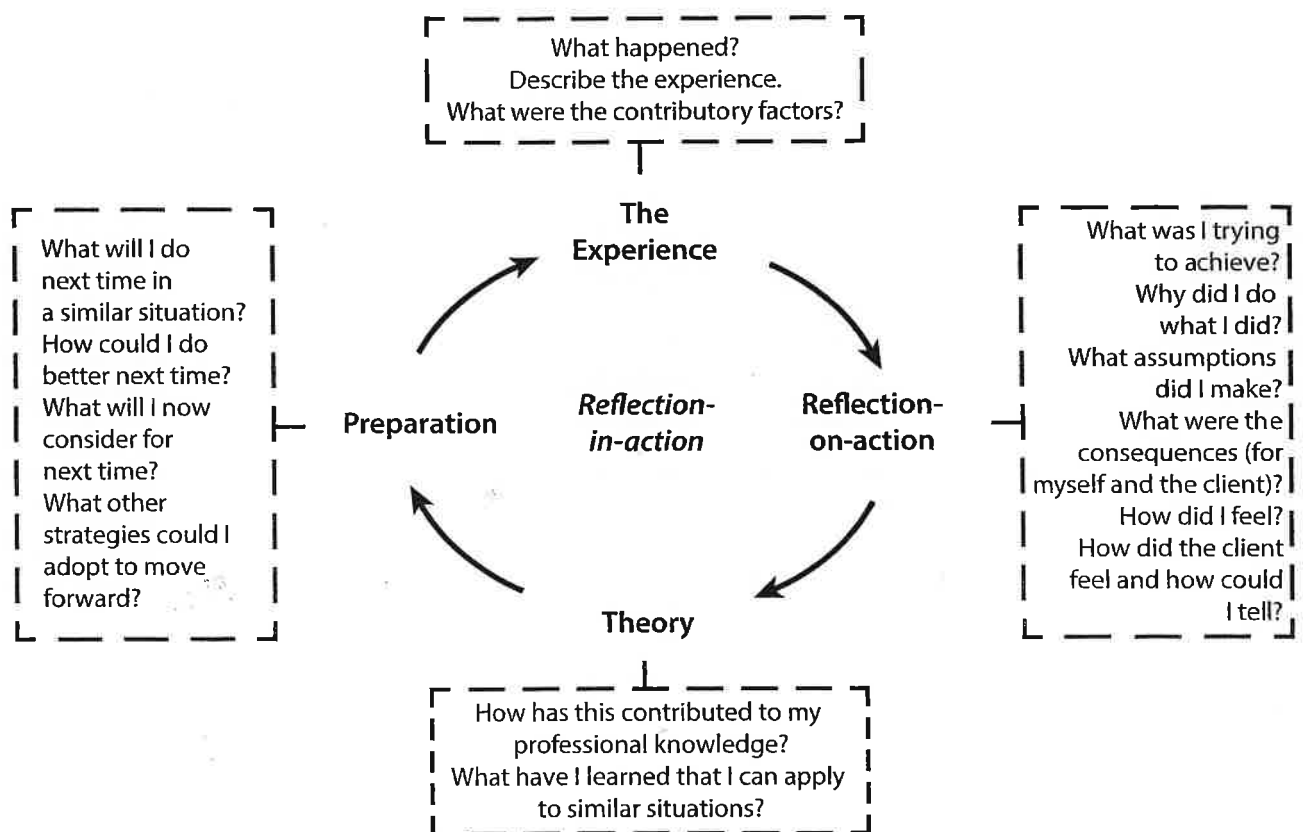
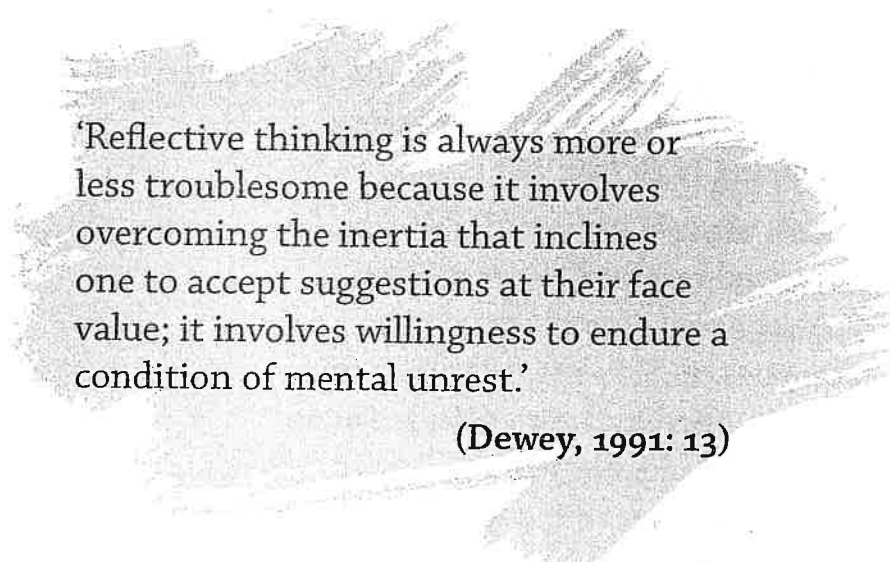


Figure 6 The Integrated Reflective Cycle

The Integrated Reflective Cycle (Bassot, 2013) shown in Figure 6 draws on several of these approaches. It is useful to compare and contrast different theories, as they often have their relative strengths and weaknesses. In this cycle, I highlight the strengths of a number of theoretical models and have posed questions around the cycle in order to prompt your thinking. Taking a questioning approach to your professional practice is an excellent way of delving deeper into not only what you did, but why – a key feature of critically reflective practice. Clearly, this approach is not completely new, as this cycle draws on some of the questions posed by Gibbs (1998) and Johns (2009).

Like any other model, the Integrated Reflective Cycle needs to be critiqued, as it also has its strengths and weaknesses. Critiquing theory and, in particular, its relationship to professional practice is always necessary. Its strengths are the things that will allow you to take your practice forward and its weaknesses are the aspects that could hinder your progress, which therefore need to be discarded. However, it is always important to be clear about the reasons for your critique and to make sure that you can justify these. For example, focusing on a model just because you like it may not be a position you can easily defend. Equally, discarding something just because it takes you into difficult territory is also questionable. Critically reflective practice demands that we accept a level of 'inner discomfort' (Boyd and Fales, 1983: 106) to enable our practice to develop.



'Reflective thinking is always more or less troublesome because it involves overcoming the inertia that inclines one to accept suggestions at their face value; it involves willingness to endure a condition of mental unrest.'

(Dewey, 1991: 13)