



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

200  
1822 - 2022

## Business Skills

## Reflective Me!

### Part 1: Reflective Practice - Unpackaging Experiences

### Part 2: Personal SWOT Analysis

*Man Geni Addysg Uwch yng Nghymru*  
*Where Higher Education Began in Wales*

[www.uwtsd.ac.uk](http://www.uwtsd.ac.uk)

# Task Description – Tasks 1 and 2

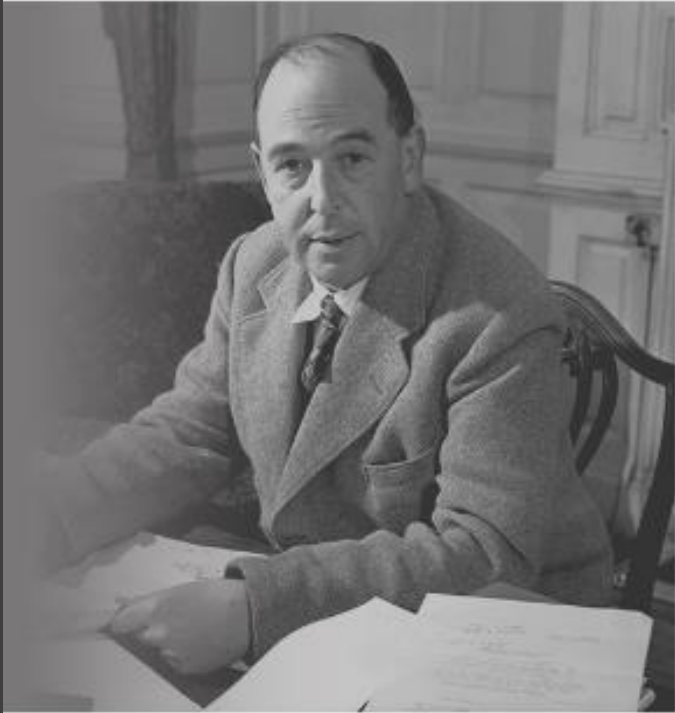
- First, let's take a look at the task description within our module handbook

# Part 1 - Unpackaging Experiences: Looking back to move forward!



# Learning Outcome

- Upon completion of this session, you will have developed an understanding of reflective practice and why it is important for personal and professional development.



“Isn’t it funny that day by day, nothing changes, but when we look back, everything is different.” CS Lewis.



# Activity Time!

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Knowledge check!

➤ What is Reflection

# What is Reflection?

When we reflect, we consider deeply something that we might not otherwise have given much thought to. This helps us to learn.

**Reflection** is concerned with consciously looking at and thinking about our experiences, actions, feelings, and responses, and then interpreting or analysing them in order to **learn** from them.

Typically, we do this by asking ourselves questions about what we did, how we did it, and what we learnt from doing it.

The key to reflecting is spotting the patterns and links in thoughts that emerge as a result of your experiences in life and in learning.

# Learning Through Reflection

Reflective learning – implies a sense of ‘open exploration’.

Reflecting on academic or professional practice through questioning makes your personal beliefs, expectations, and biases more evident to you. Understanding yourself helps you to be more successful in your studies. You become aware of the automatic or uncritical assumptions you make as a result of your world view.

(Cottrell, 2019)

# Becoming Reflective: Critical Thinking

- We are all learning everyday through experience, trial and error and reflecting on how we could improve our performance.
- Critical thinking requires you to ‘unpack’ whatever you are focusing on. You should never simply accept everything you hear and read at face value – you must always unpack it using the skills needed to reflect by looking, listening and pausing. This will allow you to identify things you may otherwise not notice.

# Learning from Experiences Reflexivity...

- In order to learn from your experiences, you must consider not only the practice of reflection, but also the process of reflexivity. Your previous experiences, attitudes and beliefs influence your thought processes, and being reflexive involves being open-minded in examining the influence that these will have on your thinking.

# Reflective Practice

Reflective practice is the ability to reflect on your actions in order to engage in a process of continuous learning.

It can:

- help you challenge assumptions and become more creative
- help you identify your strengths and weaknesses
- help you identify personal and professional goals

(Cottrell, 2019)

# That's my Goal!

- We can make changes by reflecting on the 'self-destructive patterns' which are impacting on our progress. This can enable us to 'focus more productively on reaching goals'.

***we all have goals – the question is...how do we get there?***

- In the context of your studies, you will frequently be asked to reflect on learning using a deliberate process.

# Reflective Writing

Writing reflectively involves analysing an experience, writing about how it has impacted you and what you plan to do with what you have learned from the experience. It is used in educational and professional contexts.

Writing reflectively can help you gain a deeper understanding of what has happened as writing something down often helps you to think things through.

(McMillan and Weyers, 2021)

# Reflective Writing – first person

A reflective essay is written in the **first person**. This means using terms such as 'I' and 'we' as they are more suitable for this type of assignment because you are reflecting on your own views and feelings on a particular subject.

The goal of a reflective essay is not just to establish what was learnt, but to discuss the personal experiences and findings resulting from this.

It can be helpful to use a reflective model or framework to think through the different phases of an experience or activity.

(McMillan and Weyers, 2021)



- *‘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.’*

*(Rowling, 2000, pp.518) Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*

# Models of Reflection...

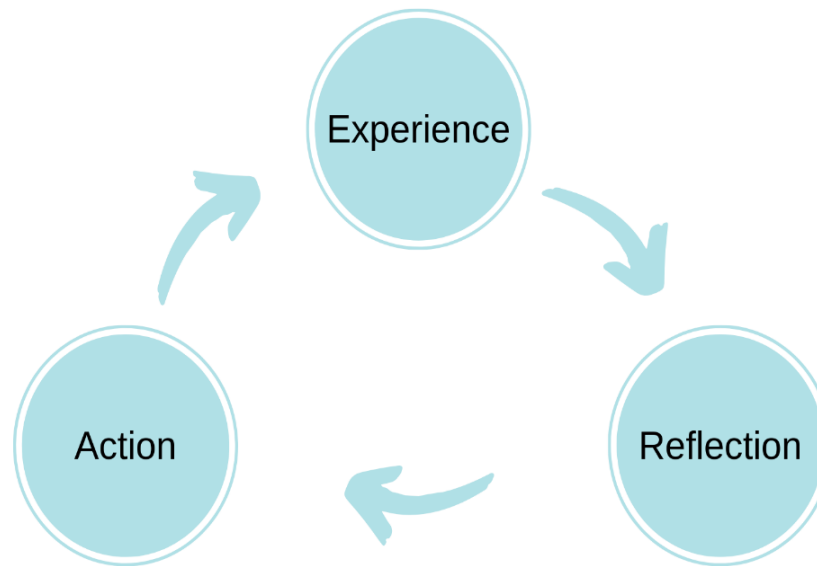
- Models of reflection can also help us identify our strengths and areas for development. For example, the ERA Cycle is a simple model and a good one to start with.



- Examples of other models are included at the end of this presentation.

# The ERA Cycle

You can see that it is an ongoing cycle as we learn from our experiences and apply what we have learned.



# The ERA Cycle

- Using the ERA model (experience, reflection, action) we can start thinking about an experience, either something we have been through before or something completely new to us. This experience can be positive or negative.
- Once something has been experienced we will start to reflect on what happened. This will allow us to think through the experience, examine our feelings about what happened and decide on the next steps.
- This leads to the final element of the cycle - thinking about what we have learned from the experience and how we will act in future as a result.

(Jasper, 2013)

# Experience

Sets the scene – briefly explains the context:

- Why were you in this situation?
- What did you hope to achieve before you started (initial goals)?

# Reflective Process

Feelings and thoughts on what happened:

- Include positive and negative thoughts and feelings as negative aspects can help you learn.

Evaluation and analysis:

- Was it a positive or negative experience over all?
- Try to identify a deeper meaning to develop understanding – why did things happen the way they did?

# Action

Summarise your learning and talk about the future.

- Are there any skills you've identified that you need to improve?
- What else could you have done during this process to improve it for yourself and others?
- How can you use what you've learnt from this experience in future aspects of your life?
- How are you going to do things moving forward?

# Part 2: Conducting a Personal SWOT Analysis



# Part 2: Introduction

- A **SWOT Analysis** is a framework for analysing your strengths and weaknesses as well as the opportunities and threats that you face. This helps you focus on your strengths, minimise your weaknesses, and take the greatest possible advantage of opportunities available to you.

(Source: Mindtools, 2022)

# SWOT Analysis Example (Adapted from: Mindtools, 2022)

| <b>Strength</b>                                       | <b>Weaknesses</b>                              |
|-------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| What do you do well?                                  | What could you improve on?                     |
| <b>Opportunities</b>                                  | <b>Threats</b>                                 |
| How could you turn your strengths into opportunities? | What threats do your weaknesses expose to you? |

# Activity Time...Let's SWOT!

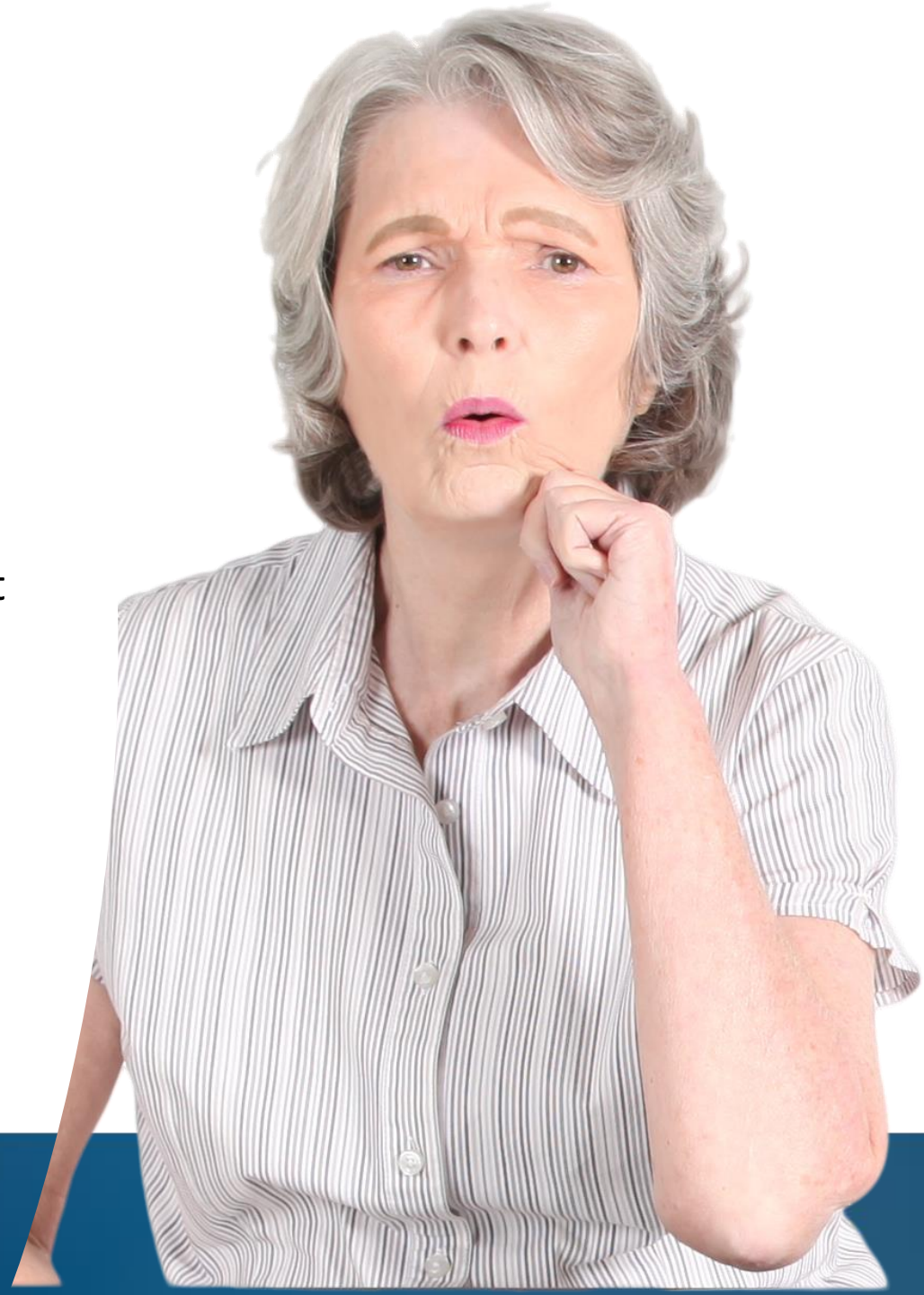
Let's conduct our own personal SWOT Analysis!



# Top Tip Time!

- Don't be tempted to conduct your SWOT analysis from the top of your head. An effective SWOT analysis comes from deep reflection.
- Simply writing what you are good at and not so good at without considering the why, what, and how's are not going to allow for an effective SWOT analysis as you will struggle to come up with a realistic action plan.

**\*A Good SWOT Joins the Dots!**



# Reflecting on the experience

- Which strengths and weaknesses do you consider most relevant to excel on this course?
- Are there any opportunities or threats to consider?

What could you do to:

- minimise your weaknesses
- take the greatest possible advantage of opportunities available to you.

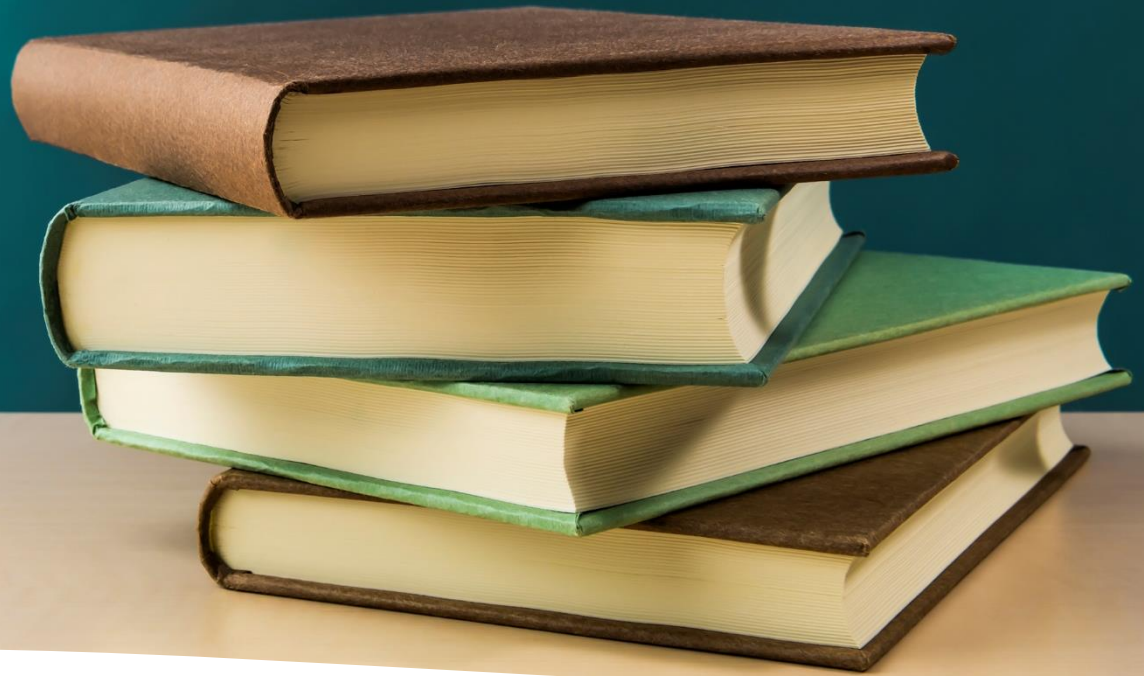




Any Questions?

# Recap: Learning Outcome

- Upon completion of this session, you will have developed an understanding of reflective practice and why it is important for personal and professional development.



Coming up  
next week...

- Getting started with research and referencing
- Take some time to familiarise yourselves with Harvard Referencing before next week's session.

# The Business Skills Take Away!

**If you would like to extend your Learning...**

There are several models of reflection that have been developed to help us be reflective.

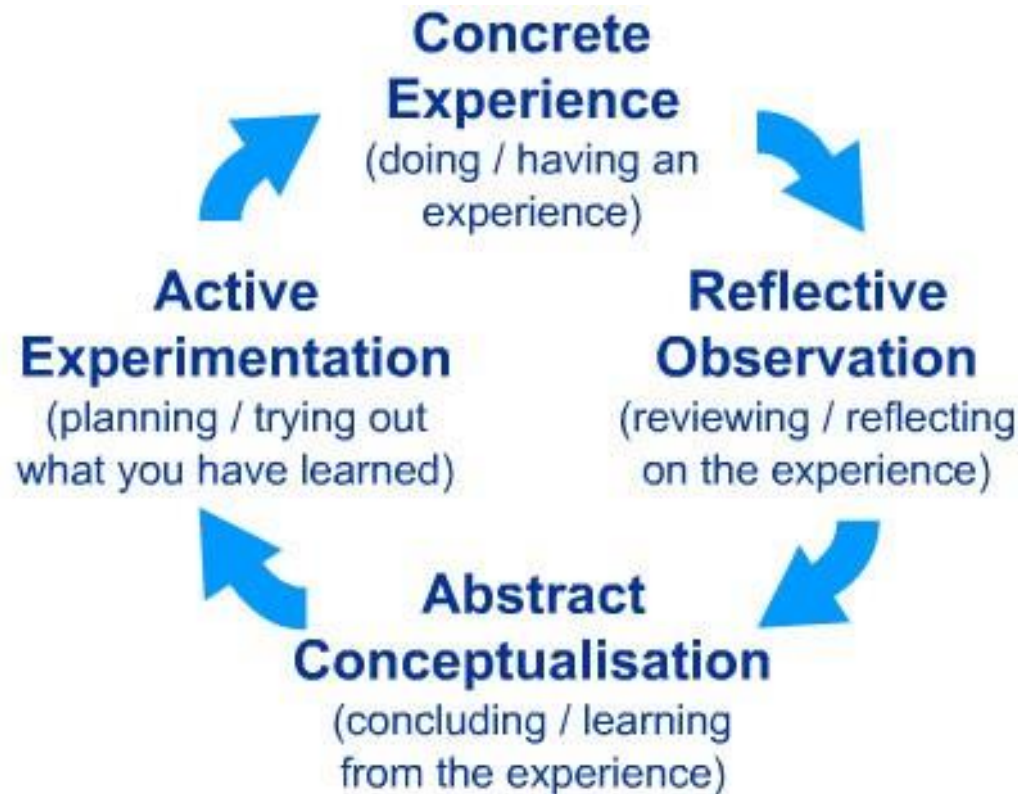


# Gibbs' Reflective Cycle:



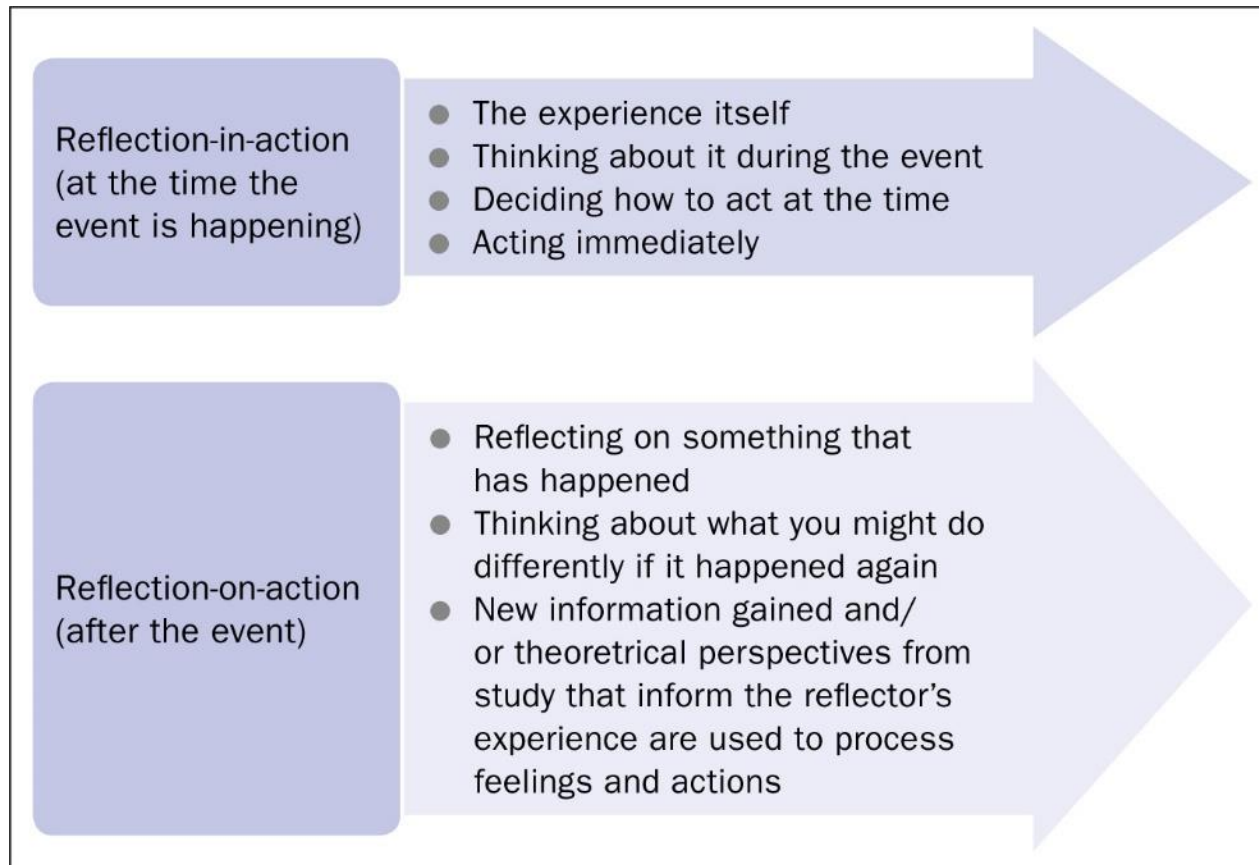
You can read more about this in Gibbs, G. (1998) *Learning by Doing: A Guide to Teaching and Learning Methods*. Oxford: Further Education Unit, Oxford Polytechnic

# Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle



You can read more about this in Kolb, D. (1984) *Experiential Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development*. Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall.

# Schön's Model of Reflection - in action and on action



You can read more about this in Schön, D. (1983) *The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action*. New York: Basic Books

# References

- Cottrell, S. (2019) *The Study Skills Handbook*. Fifth edition. London: Macmillan International Higher Education/Red Globe Press.
- Jasper, M. (2013). *Beginning Reflective Practice*. Andover: Cengage Learning.
- McMillan, K, & Weyers, J (2021) *The Study Skills Book*. Harlow: Pearson Education Limited.
- Mindtools (2022) *Personal SWOT Analysis: Making the most of your talents and opportunities*. Available at:  
[https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newTMC\\_05\\_1.htm](https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newTMC_05_1.htm)  
(Accessed: 17 August 2023).