

REFLECTIVE PRACTICE

By three methods we learn wisdom: first by reflection, which is noblest; second, by imitation, which is easiest; and third by experience, which is the bitterest. (Confucius, quoted in Hinett, 2002, pv. V)



REFLECTION

'reflection In the context of learning Is a generic term for those Intellectual and affective activities In which Individuals engage to explore their experiences In order to lead to new understandings and appreciations' Boud 1985

REFLECTIVE PRACTICE (GILLIE BOLTON 2014)

■ Reflective practice is a state of mind, an ongoing attitude to life and work, the pearl grit in the oyster of practice and education; danger lies in it being a separate curriculum element with a set of exercises. Brookfield calls it a 'reflexive habit... second nature' (2009).

- It enables us to make illuminative sense of where we are in our own practice and our relation to our profession and our institutions
- It enables professionals to learn from experience about: themselves; their work; the way they relate to home and work, significant others and the wider society and cultural structures (e.g. institutions) are formed and control us.

You relate the clinical work to the theory in reflective practice and that give you 360 degree way of knowing....

REFLECTIVE STRATEGIES

Strategies challenge assumptions, ideological illusions, damaging social and cultural biases, inequalities; and it questions personal behaviours which perhaps silence the voices of others or otherwise marginalise them.

STRATEGIES ALLOW FOR FURTHER ENQUIRY

- What we know and which we need to explore further
- What we know but do not know we know
- What we do not know and want to know
- What we think, feel, believe, value, understand about our role and boundaries
- How our actions match up with what we believe
- How to value and take into account personal feelings.

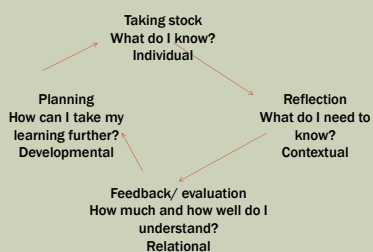
REFLECTIVE STRATEGIES

Practitioners explore difficult areas of experience, such as:

- How to perceive from others' perspective
- How to value others' perspective, however different they are from us
- What we can change in our context; how to work with what we cannot change
- How others perceive us, and their feelings and thoughts about events, and our actions
- Why we become stressed, and its impact on life and practice
- How to counteract seemingly given social, cultural and political structures.

We know a great deal more than we are aware, absorbing information unwittingly. We have challenging material shoved into boxes mentally labelled *do not open*. We have not celebrated and learned from positive experiences (Ghaye, 2011)

KOLB'S LEARNING CYCLE (1984)



CRITICAL THINKING (COTRELL 2005)

- Identify other people's positions/ arguments/ conclusions
- Evaluate the evidence for alternative points of view
- Weigh up opposing arguments/ evidence fairly
- Read between the lines
- Identify false/ inaccurate assumptions
- Recognise techniques to make certain positions appealing
- Reflect on issues in a structured way, bringing logic to bear
- Draw conclusions- valid/ justified
- Present a point of view

CT BENEFITS

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Improved attention and observation ■ Integration of theory and practice ■ New and expanded knowledge ■ Safe and effective practitioners ■ Protection of the public ■ Context of practice ■ Changing needs ■ Ownership and responsibility ■ Ability to identify key points in a text/ message | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Stimulates enquiry, ■ increases self awareness. ■ Develops analytical skills ■ Encourages learning ■ Assists practice teachers in analysing the quality of the student's competencies ■ Implications for future practice. ■ Focused reading ■ Ability to respond to appropriate points in a message |
|--|--|

BARRIERS TO CT (COTRELL 2005)

- Misunderstanding of what is meant by criticism
- Over estimating personal reasoning abilities
- Lack of methods, strategies, practice
- Reluctance to critique experts
- Affective reasons
- Mistaking information for understanding
- Insufficient focus and attention to detail

REFLECTIVE FRAMEWORKS - (SCHÖN 1987)

■ **In Action:**

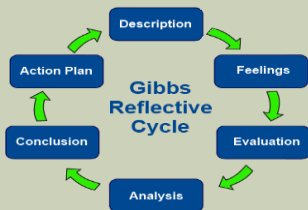
- practising, influences decisions and care at that moment,
- Promotes skilled and flexible responses of the expert practitioner

■ **On Action:**

- After the event, views different interventions, adds knowledge
- Promotes development of professional skills and knowledge

'We cannot stand outside ourselves and our work (from the cliff), in order to be objective and clear. We work in the swampy lowlands' (Schon 1987)

REFLECTIVE FRAME WORK: GIBBS REFLECTIVE CYCLE



- Description – what happened?
- Feelings- what were you thinking and feeling?
- Evaluation- what was good and bad about the experience?
- Analysis: what sense can you make of the situation?
- Conclusion- what else could you have done?
- Action plan- if it arose again what would you do?

REFLECTIVE SUMMARY/COMMENTARY

- Description
- Feelings
- Evaluation
- Analysis
- Conclusion
- Action Plan

Adapted from: Gibbs, G. (1988) Learning by doing: a guide to teaching and learning methods. Oxford: Further Education Unit.

DESCRIPTION

- In this section, you need to explain what you are reflecting on to your reader. Perhaps include background information, such as what it is you're reflecting on and tell the reader who was involved. It's important to remember to keep the information provided relevant and to-the-point. Don't waffle on about details that aren't required – if you do this, you're just using up valuable words that you'll get minimal marks for.

FEELINGS

- Discuss your feelings and thoughts about the experience. Consider questions such as: How did you feel at the time? What did you think at the time? What did you think about the incident afterwards? You can discuss your emotions honestly, but make sure to remember at all times that this is an academic piece of writing, so avoid 'chatty' text.

EVALUATION

■ For your evaluation, discuss how well you think things went. Perhaps think about: How did you react to the situation, and how did other people react? What was good and what was bad about the experience? If you are writing about a difficult incident, did you feel that the situation was resolved afterwards? Why/why not? This section is a good place to include the theory and the work of other authors – remember it is important to include references in reflective writing.

ANALYSIS

■ In your analysis, consider what might have helped or hindered the event. You also have the opportunity here to compare your experience with the literature you have read. This section is very important, particularly for higher level writing. Many students receive poor marks for reflective assignments for not bringing the theory and experience together.

CONCLUSION

■ In your conclusion, it is important to acknowledge: whether you could have done anything else; what you have learned from the experience; consider whether you could you have responded in a different way. If you are talking about a positive experience...discuss whether you would do the same again to ensure a positive outcome. Also consider if there is anything you could change to improve things even further. If the incident was negative...tell your reader how you could have avoided it happening and also how you could make sure it doesn't happen again.

ACTION PLAN

■ Action plans sum up anything you need to know and do to improve for next time. Perhaps you feel that you need to learn about something or attend some training. Could you ask your tutor or placement supervisor for some advice? What can you do which means you will be better equipped to cope with a similar event?

ACADEMIC REFLECTIVE WRITING...

...**does not** address its reader using 'you'. You are writing about your experiences.
 ...**does not** use slang, contractions (*it's, don't I'll*) or note-taking abbreviations (*i.e., e.g., etc.*).
 ...**does** incorporate information from more passive learning, such as methods from textbooks, journal articles, social theories or procedures, policies or legislations, has to offer.
 ...**is** critical, given the above, it reappraises and reassesses what the writer thinks, believes and does so in light of an evaluation of theory and research.

...**does** reference its sources. It is not free writing. Now is the time to look up where something you have taken for granted all these years might be from.

...**does** use careful structure, paragraphing and good grammar, spelling and punctuation. It still has good-text basics such as a clear introduction and a conclusion.

...**does not** generalise. It is specific as it can be about experience and its relationships. It makes deep observations and links these to current learning, theory and research. It does not gloss over small but significant implications.

■ **does** use 'I' judiciously. This is not to say it is simply free writing about your personal opinions and beliefs, but reflective writing cannot work if there is no ownership of the feelings, experiences and learning being explored.

REFERENCES AND BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Bolton, G. (2014) *Reflective Practice*. London: Sage
- Boud D, Keogh R& Walker I edit (1985) *Reflection: Turning Experience Into Learning*. London Kogan Page
- Cottrell S. (2005) *Critical Thinking Skills*. Basingstoke. Palgrave Macmillan
- Gibbs G (1988) *Learning by doing: a guide to teaching and learning methods*. London FEU
- Ghaye A & Ghaye K (1998) *Teaching and Learning through Critical Reflective Practice*. London Fulton Publishers
- Kolb DA (1984) *Experiential Learning: experience as the source of learning and development*. New Jersey Prentice Hall.
- Moon J (2004) *A Handbook of Reflective and Experiential Learning: theory and practice*. London Routledge Falmer
- Osterman K& Kottkamp R () *Reflective Practice for Educators*. 2nd edit. California Corwin Press
- Palmer AM, Burns S& Bulman C (1994) *Reflective Practice in Nursing: the growth of the professional practitioner*. Oxford Blackwell Science
- Scaife J (2010) *Supervising the reflective Practitioner: an essential guide to theory and practice*. London Routledge
- Schön DA (1987) *Educating the Reflective Practitioner*. San Francisco Jossey Bass.
- Thompson S& Thompson N (2008) *The Critically Reflective Practitioner*. Basingstoke Palgrave Macmillan
