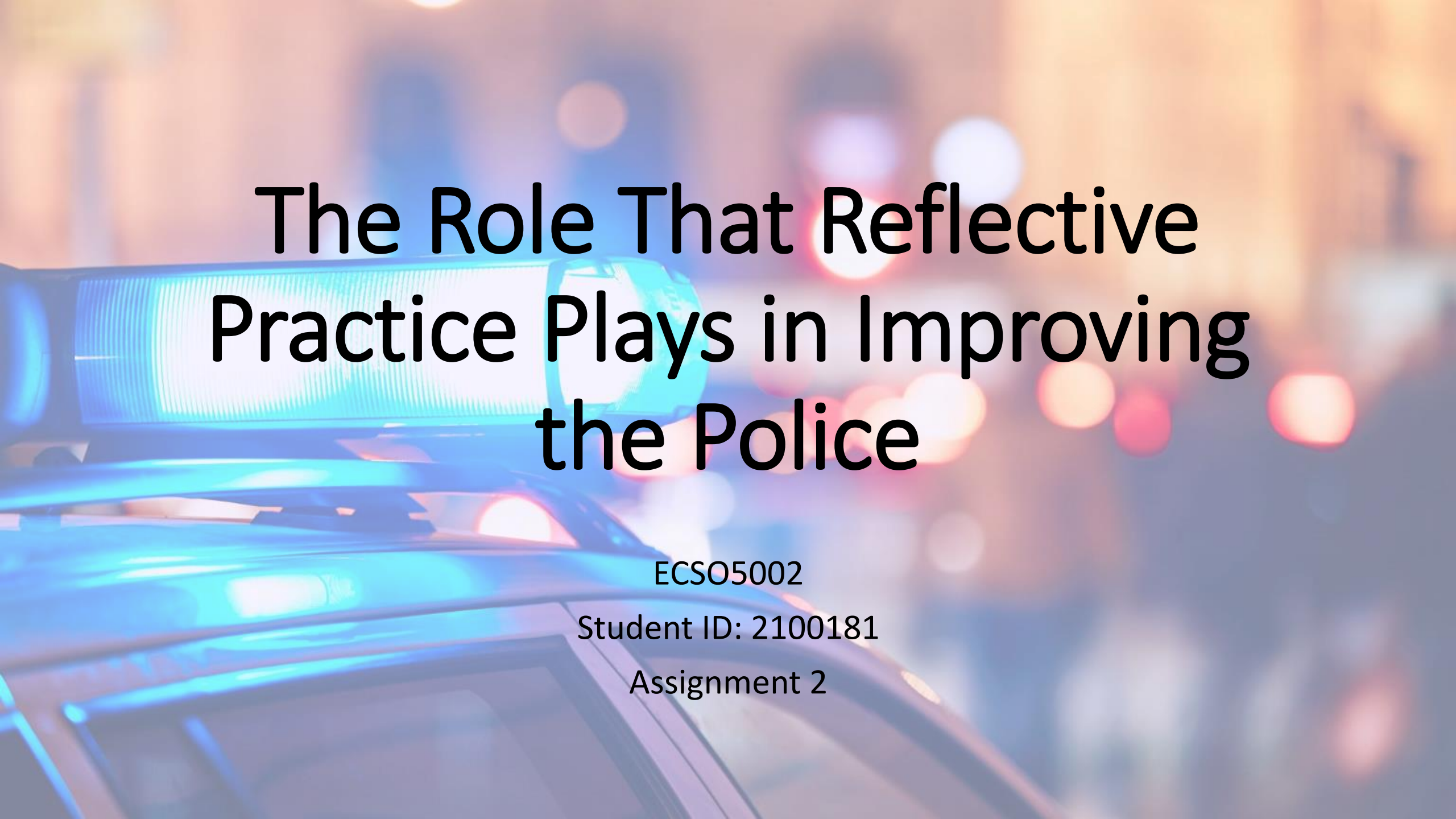




The Role That Reflective Practice Plays in Improving the Police

ECSO5002

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Assignment 2



Introduction

- This presentation will examine in detail how reflective practice has improved the Police in England and Wales (College of Policing, 2023a, np; College of Policing, 2020, p. 7)
- This will be done by firstly defining what reflective practise is. The role that the Police play in society will then be explored. Additionally, the model that is used by the Police will be discussed (Pereira, 1999, np; Gibbs, 1988, p. 47; College of Policing, 2023b, np)
- How this model is used within the Police will then be examined, where the benefits and issues of reflective practice will be compared and how these issues are being addressed today (Christopher, 2015, np; Strong, 2019, p. 4)



What is Reflective Practice?



- Collin and Karsenti (2011, np) argue that reflective practice is a professional competency, that is used in work and in everyday life
- Reflective practice is a complicated concept that has been interpreted differently by many theorists (Collin and Karsenti, 2011, np)
- However, reflective practice can be broadly described as individuals thinking critically and constructively about their actions and how they can be improved for next time (Rolfe, 2002, p. 22).
- From a policing perspective, reflective practice is 'the ability to reflect on your actions and improve the way you work' (College of Policing, 2020, p. 2)
- The College of Policing (2020, p. 7) encourage the use of Gibbs's model of reflective practice (Gibbs, 1988, p. 42)

Gibbs' Reflective Cycle

1. Description:

- What was the event? Who was there? Where? When? What was the reaction of the individual? What was the result?

2. Feelings:

- What were the feelings and thoughts at the time? What were the feelings before the event? What are the feelings of the individual now?

3. Evaluation/ Analysis:

- What worked and what didn't work? Was the contribution of the individual positive or negative? What experience can be brought in to help make sense of the situation?

4. Conclusions:

- What was learned? What can be done differently in the future? What skills can be developed?

5. Action Plan

- What will be done going forward? Do changes need to be made? What areas need to be worked on?



The Role of the Police

- 'What the police do is often presented to the public as a balance between crime fighting and order maintenance' (Paterson and Pollock, 2022, p. 4)
- The role that police officers play in society can be described as peacekeepers that are using the deterrence of their uniformed presence on the streets and as a last resort, the 'threat of their legal power to use force' (Paterson and Pollock, 2022, p. 4)
- Due to the nature of this role, it is important that officers are able to reflect on experiences and mistakes, which will aid in the development of officers in a professional way (Copely, 2011, p. 37)



Complaints

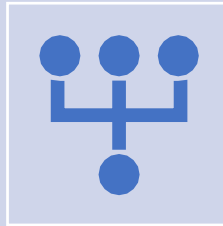
- According to the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) (2023, np), the levels of complaints recorded against 'police forces and local policing bodies' have increased in 2022/23, when compared to 2021/22 (IOPC, 2023, np)
- The IOPC believes that one way this can be tackled is through the use of reflective practice and learning (IOPC, 2022a, p. 2)
- This strategy can be used for officers who are underperforming or have taken actions which fall short of public expectations, but is not gross misconduct (IOPC, 2022a, p. 2)



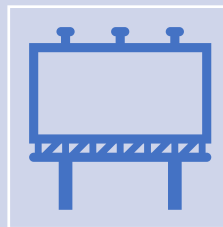
Complaints – Theory



For officers underperforming or undertaking 'Practice Requiring Improvement (PRI)', the reflective practice framework is used (IOPC, 2022a, p. 2)

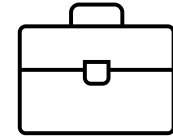


This framework is designed to be used in a collaborative way with managers, which gives officers a chance to discuss areas of improvement (IOPC, 2022a, p. 2)



Parsons and Stephenson (2005, np) argues that reflective practice is less difficult when done in a collaborative manner and working with others may help to identify further skills that need to be developed

Complaints – Policy

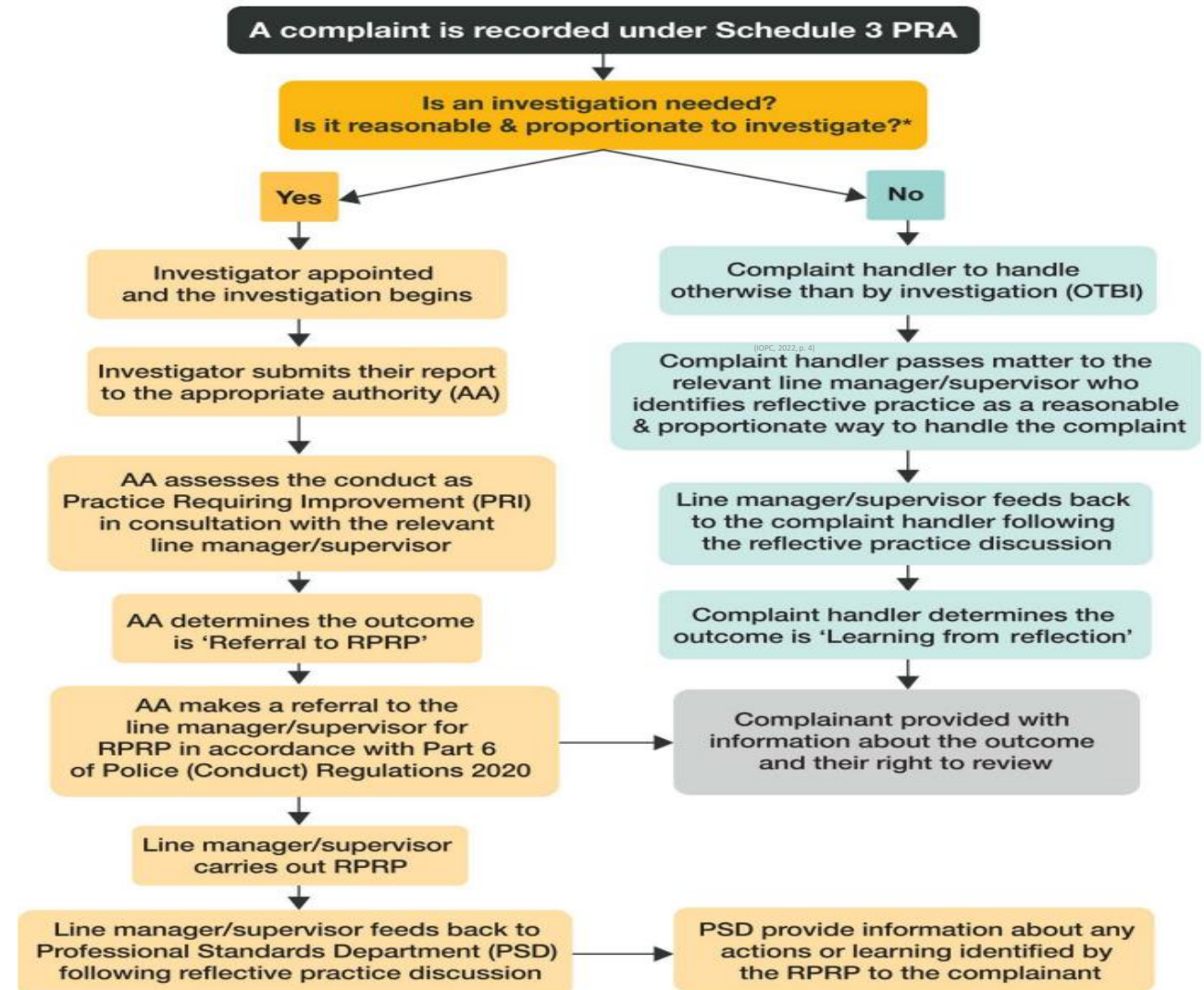


- **The Police (Conduct) Regulations 2020:**
- Sets out details of the reflective practice review process and how and when officers should be referred to the process by their line manager
- The reflective practice review process involves two stages;
 - Fact finding stage – Where enquires are made by the reviewer to determine what happened
 - Discussion stage – A discussion between the officer and the reviewer where areas of improvement and lessons that can be learned are discussed in detail
- On completion of the process, a report must be made which summarises the issue and the actions that will be undertaken to address these issues by the officer

The Reflective Practice Framework

Image 1: Using the Reflective Practice Framework

Using the reflective practice framework



Why use this process?

In practice, The IOPC believes that this process will be beneficial for officers as it can give officers skills to enhance their professionalism and effectiveness (IOPC, 2022b, p. 5)

It is being used to allow officers to acknowledge their behaviour and how they can handle situations differently (IOPC, 2022b, p. 5)

It can be used as a way for officers to debrief and discuss their own feelings, which is important for the wellbeing of officers (IOPC, 2022b, p. 5; Street *et al.* 2009, np)

Is the Reflective Practice Review Process Working?

- After the implementation of this process in 2020, the IOPC asked for feedback from Police Forces about the process
- The IOPC wanted to see how the process was working in practice
- However, the response they received back was mixed

The Positives

- Data collected found that when the reflective practice review process was utilized, it was a positive experience
- There was positive feedback from sergeants
- While initial issues were reported with the implementation of the process, it is now currently running smoothly

The Negatives

- The idea of the review process has been seen by officers as a sanction
- There have reportedly been missed opportunities to use the process where its impact would have been positive
- The amount of workload that officers have has meant that the training of the process has been prevented



The Findings

- ‘There is a lack of understanding’ when it comes to using reflective practice (IOPC, 2022c, p. 2)
- Reflective practice can be informal, and there is nothing in place to record this (IOPC, 2022c, p. 3)
- The use of reflective practice is different force by force. Therefore, there is an argument that suggests a change of culture is needed (IOPC, 2022c, p. 3)

Changing the Culture of Policing

- Christopher (2015, np) argued that the police needed reforming to meet the demands of a modern society and that officers must learn to think more critically
- Copley (2011, p. 11) agrees, and suggests that learning within policing should be an ongoing process of reflection
- This learning would help officers to think more critically and to think of other ways of performing tasks, which improves the quality of service that the police can provide overall (Copley, 2011, p. 11)



How is this way of learning being implemented?

- Theorists such as Copley (2011, p. 17) argued that policing students would benefit from academic level learning as degrees are able to teach students to learn critically
- In 2020, the Policing Education Qualifications Framework was implemented which is still in use today (Strong, 2019, p. 4; College of Policing, 2023c, np)
- It introduced three new entry routes for students to become police officers (College of Policing 2023c, np)
- These three routes are much more academic, and students must either gain a degree or already have a degree when training to become a police officer (Strong, 2019, pp. 3-4)



What are the benefits of this method of learning?

- Students will bring in theory and research into their practice in policing, which will help to justify decisions and research can help students to adapt to new situations
- Students will be able to blend their learning and put what they learn in the classroom in practice as a police officer
- Students will learn about reflective practice as a positive form of learning and students will have allocated time to practice reflective practice, so that they are able to do it throughout their careers

The Future of Modern Policing

- The result of this method of learning will result in the police officers of the future being able to combine reflecting in action with reflecting on action (Maclean and Harrison, 2009, p. 116; Strong, 2019, p. 9)
- There is evidence to suggest that police officers reflect in the moment, which is reflecting in action (Copley, 2011, p. 17; Maclean and Harrison, 2009, p. 116)
- According to Maclean and Harrison (2011, p. 116) being able to have combine reflecting in action with reflecting on action results in the best possible practice



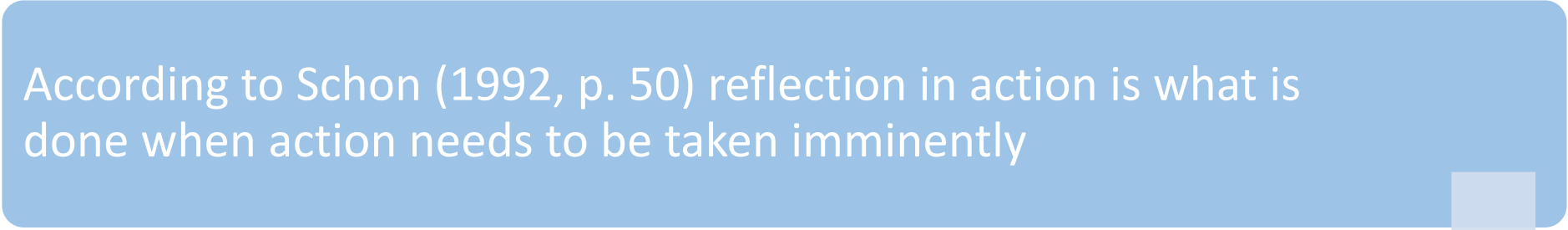
Reflection in Action and Reflection on Action

- These concepts were put forward by Donald Schon in 1992 (Taylor and Francis Group, 2024, np)
- In his book *The Reflective Practitioner*, Schon (1992, p. 50) compares reflection on action and reflection in action

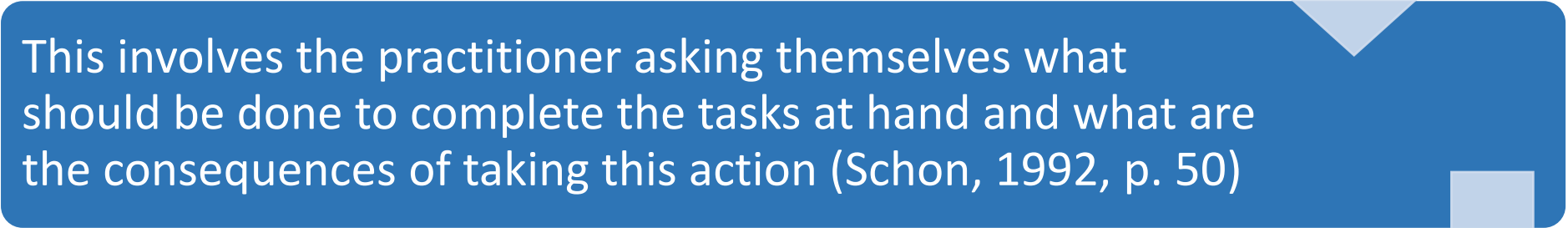


Reflection in Action

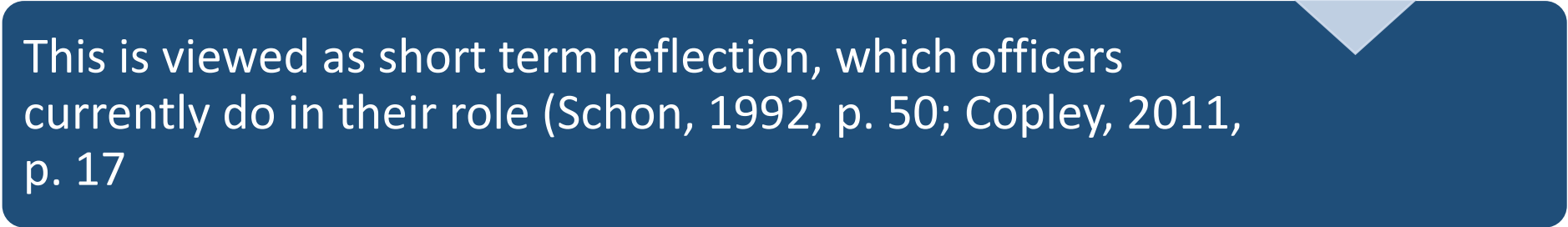
According to Schon (1992, p. 50) reflection in action is what is done when action needs to be taken imminently



This involves the practitioner asking themselves what should be done to complete the tasks at hand and what are the consequences of taking this action (Schon, 1992, p. 50)



This is viewed as short term reflection, which officers currently do in their role (Schon, 1992, p. 50; Copley, 2011, p. 17)



Reflection on Action

Reflecting in action is 'thinking on your feet' (Schon, 1992, p. 54)

Reflection on Action involves taking the time to study what action has been taken in a more objective manner (Schon, 1992, p. 55)

This is the concept that the College of Policing wants to promote more going forward (Copley, 2011, p. 17)

Conclusion

- In conclusion, it is clear to see that reflective practice is beneficial and improving the Police, and there is a model in place for police officers to use (College of Policing, 2023a, np; College of Policing, 2020, p. 7)
- However, reflective practice as an official process is relatively new in the police and there is evidence to suggest that there have been issues in its implementation (IOPC, 2022, p. 2)
- However, there is work being done to improve this, and the officers of the future should be well equipped to utilize reflective practice in the best way possible (Copley, 2011, p. 17)





Thank You So Much For
Listening



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