

Gibbs' Reflective Cycle (1988)

Gibbs' Reflective Cycle is a popular model for structured reflection, widely used in psychology, education, healthcare, and professional training. It helps individuals learn from experiences by moving through six stages in a logical sequence.

1. Description – What happened?

This stage is about presenting the facts **without judgement or analysis**.

You describe:

- The situation
- Who was involved
- What you did
- What happened next

Purpose: Set the scene clearly.

2. Feelings – What were you thinking and feeling?

Here, you explore your **internal response** during the situation.

You reflect on:

- Emotions (e.g., anxious, confident, frustrated)
- Thoughts at the time
- Feelings before and after the event

Purpose: Identify emotional influences that shaped your actions.

3. Evaluation – What was good and bad about the experience?

You assess the **positive and negative** elements of the situation.

Examples:

- What went well?
- What didn't go well?
- What were the outcomes?

Purpose: Begin to judge the experience constructively.

4. Analysis – How can you make sense of the situation?

This is the **deep thinking** stage where you link the experience to:

- Theory
- Research
- Ethical principles
- Skills frameworks
- Psychological concepts

You explore:

- Why things happened
- What contributed to success or problems
- What you learned about the wider context

Purpose: Understand the experience in depth.

5. Conclusion – What else could you have done?

Here you consider:

- What you learned
- What you might do differently next time
- Whether you could have handled things better

Purpose: Summarise key learning points.

6. Action Plan – What will you do in the future?

You propose clear, practical steps for improvement.

For example:

- Training you will undertake
- Strategies to use
- Skills to develop
- How you'll approach similar situations differently

Purpose: Turn reflection into professional growth.
