



REFLECTIVE PRACTICE WORKSHOP

June 2017

Claire Sewell

Research Support Skills Coordinator
Office of Scholarly Communication
ces43@cam.ac.uk



Contents page

| | |
|---|----|
| Introduction to reflective practice | 2 |
| Definitions of reflective practice | 2 |
| Why should you reflect?..... | 2 |
| Everyday reflective practice | 3 |
| Listening exercise | 4 |
| Reflective practice models | 5 |
| Pros and cons of reflective practice models..... | 9 |
| Barriers to reflective practice | 10 |
| Reflective writing | 11 |
| What is reflective writing?..... | 11 |
| Where might you use reflective writing in the workplace?..... | 11 |
| Reflection in action exercise..... | 13 |
| Reflective writing exercises | 14 |
| Exercise 1 - Free writing | 14 |
| Exercise 2 – Writing about an experience | 17 |
| Top tips for reflective practice | 19 |
| Mini reflections on the workshop | 20 |
| Bibliography | 21 |

Introduction to reflective practice

Definitions of reflective practice

Please take a couple of minutes to write down what *reflective practice* means for you. There is no one correct answer as different people will have different experiences of reflection.

Why should you reflect?

You can practice reflection both within the workplace and out in the wider world. We all have that little voice inside our heads that reminds us of all the things that went wrong during a particular experience, whether that be giving a library tour or having a job interview. You always focus on what you should have said or what you said wrong. But what about all the things that you did right? Being a reflective practitioner can help you to focus on everything that happened and improve for the future.

There are many other reasons why you might want to reflect:

- If you know what worked then you can repeat this in the future
- Gives you areas for improvement/development
- Aid creativity and helps to avoid stagnation
- Helps to overcome assumptions we might make about other people
- Key part of emotional intelligence
- Helps to maintain a healthy work/life balance

Add any other reasons below:

Everyday reflective practice

Reflection can happen at any time and for any reason. Think about some of the ways and places that you reflect during a typical day.

NOTE: This doesn't have to be formal reflection.

e.g. Chatting with a friend over coffee

Listening exercise

Reflecting in groups can be a really helpful exercise but it's important to listen as well as talk. This exercise aims to develop your listening skills.

In pairs sit back to back. Person A will be talking and Person B will be drawing. Person A should describe the diagram on the card and Person B should try to recreate it. You have **three minutes** and no questions are allowed. Then swap and repeat so that Person A is drawing.

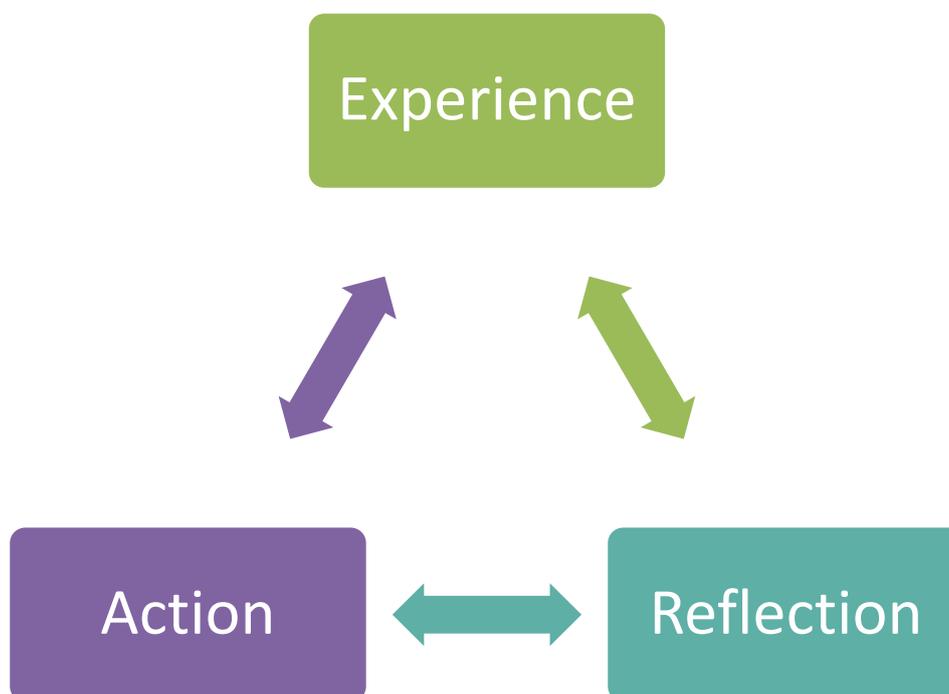


Reflective practice models

ERA Cycle

This simple cycle summarises the three main components of reflective practice – experience, reflection and action.

- **Experience** – what happens to us
- **Reflection** – the process which helps us think through the experience
- **Action** – what we do as a result of reflection

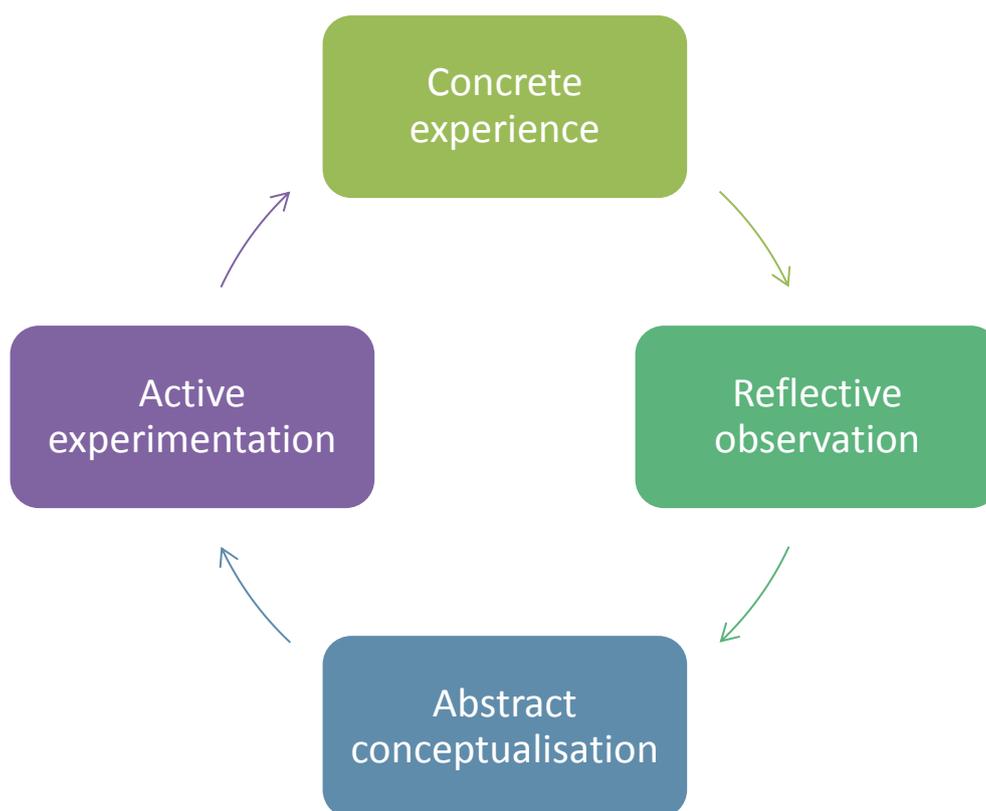


The Reflective Practice Guide: An Interdisciplinary Approach to Critical Reflection / B. Bassot (2016)

Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle

This cycle is based on theories about how people learn from experiences at work.

- **Concrete experience** – either a completely new experience or a reinterpretation of one that has occurred before
- **Reflective observation** – thinking about the experience and noting anything you haven't experienced before
- **Abstract conceptualisation** – the reflection process causes you to develop new ideas/concepts about what might have happened
- **Active experimentation** – applying what you have learnt to new situations

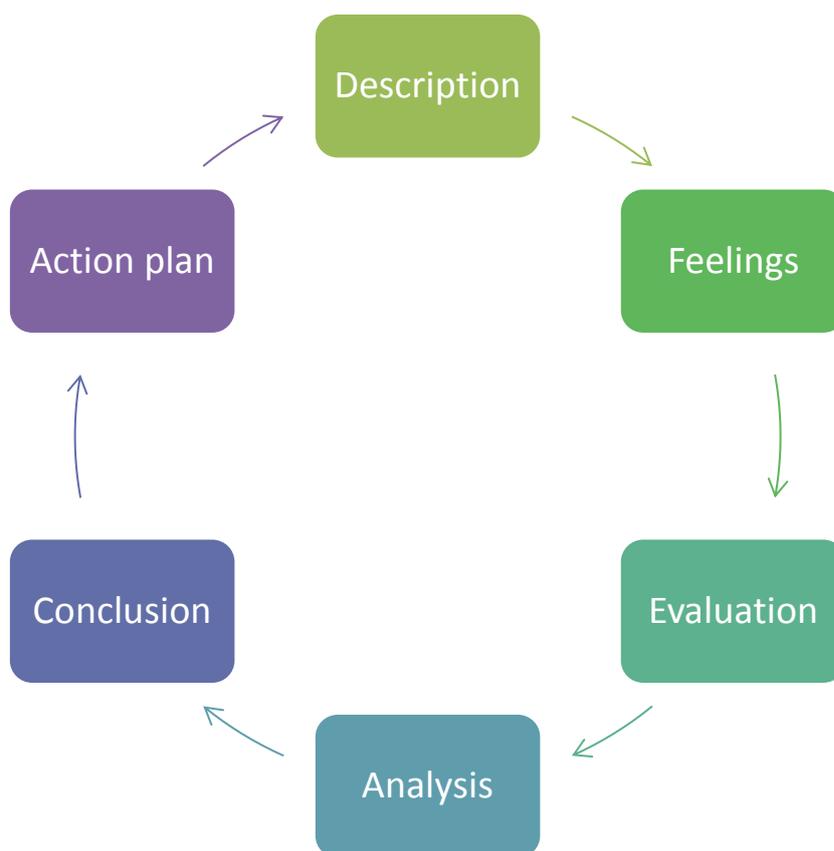


Experiential Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development / D. Kolb (1984)

Gibb's Reflective Cycle

This cycle emphasises that learning happens from experience and takes into account our feelings surrounding an experience.

- **Description** – what happened during the event?
- **Feelings** – what were you thinking and feeling about the experience?
- **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** – what would you do differently next time?

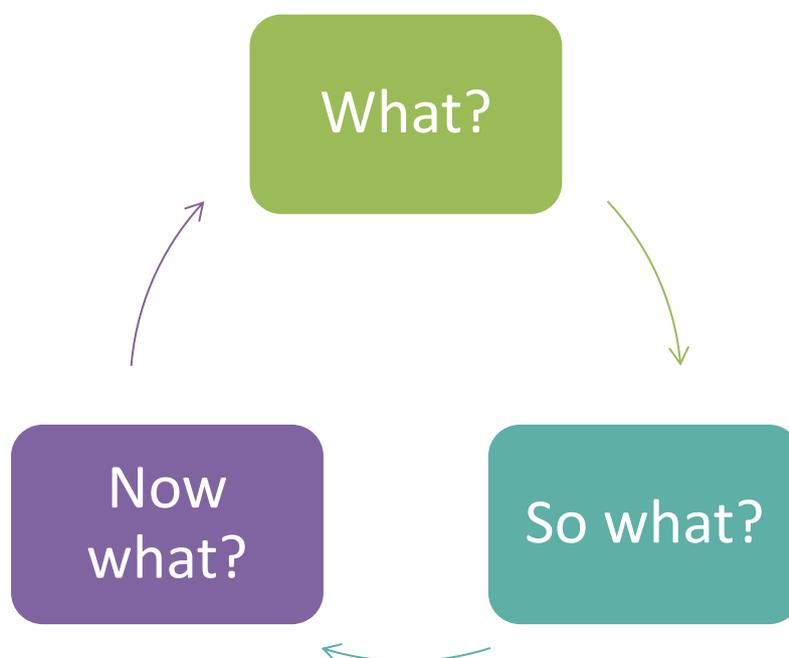


Learning by Doing: A Guide to Teaching and Learning / G. Gibbs (1998)

Driscoll's What Model

The 'What?' model helps to form a basic plan when learning from an experience. It is particularly useful as a prompt for reflective writing.

- **What?** – describe the experience
- **So what?** – reflect on the experience. What have you learnt as a result?
- **Now what?** – how will you use what you have learnt in future practice?



Practicing Clinical Supervision: A Reflective Approach for Healthcare Professionals / J. Driscoll (ed.) (2007)

Pros and cons of reflective practice models

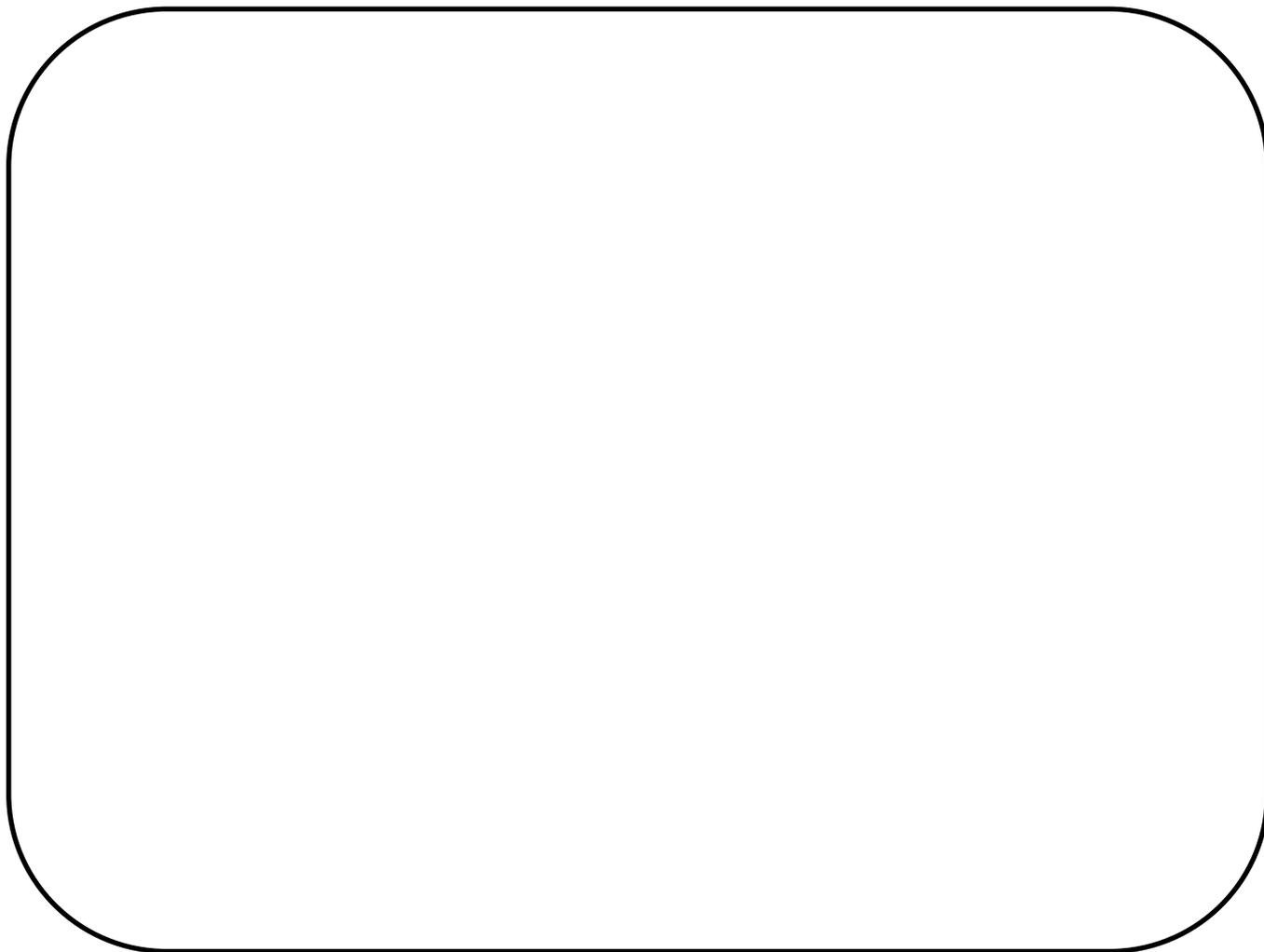
A word of caution about models of reflective practice (or any other model). Although they can be a great way to start thinking about reflection, remember that all models have downsides. A summary of pros and cons can be found below.

| Pros | Cons |
|--|---|
| Gives you a structure to follow | Implies that steps have to be followed in a certain way |
| Provides a starting point | In the real world you may not start at the 'beginning' |
| Allows you to assess all levels of situation | Models may not apply to every situation |
| You will know when the process is complete | Reflective practice is a continuous process |

Can you think of any other pros and cons?

Barriers to reflective practice

There are many reasons why becoming a reflective practitioner is a positive step but it would be unrealistic to think that it is always easier. Think about some of the barriers you may face in your reflection and list them below.



Reflective writing

What is reflective writing?

Writing reflectively involves critically analysing an experience, recording how it has impacted you and what you plan to do with your new knowledge. It can help you reflect on a deeper level as the act of getting something down on paper helps many people to think an experience through.

The key to reflective writing is to be analytical **not** descriptive. Always ask why rather than describing what happened.

Remember...

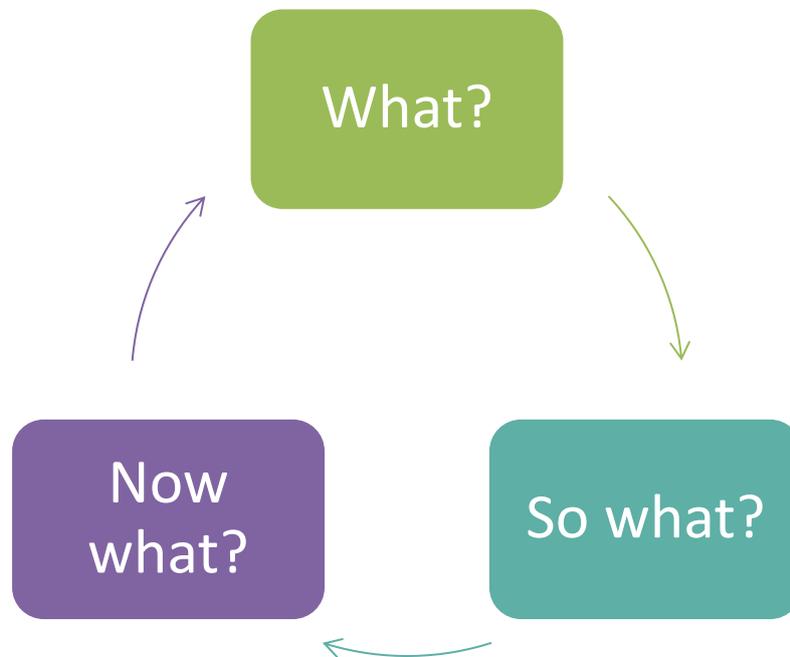
| Reflective writing is... | Reflective writing isn't... |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Written in the first person | Written in the third person |
| Analytical | Descriptive |
| Free flowing | What you <i>think</i> you should write |
| Subjective | Objective |
| Tool to challenge assumptions | Tool to ignore assumptions |
| Time investment | Waste of time |

The Reflective Practice Guide: an Interdisciplinary Approach / B. Bassot (2016)

Where might you use reflective writing in the workplace?

Driscoll's What model

This simple model is useful as a way to get started with reflective writing. Simply follow the three prompts below:



Practicing Clinical Supervision: A Reflective Approach for Healthcare Professionals / J. Driscoll (ed.) (2007)

What? - describe the situation: achievements, consequences, responses, feelings and problems

So what? – discuss what has been learnt: learning about self, relationships, models, attitudes, thoughts, understanding and improvements

Now what? – identify what needs to be done in order to improve future outcomes and develop learning

Reflection in action exercise



Try this exercise to get you to think about the *What?* model. Get into pairs and choose person one and person two. Person A needs to think of an activity they have recently taken part in. Person B will ask the three what questions: **what, so what, now what?** Person A should note their answers below. After **two** minutes switch places so Person B is now describing an activity.

Reflective writing exercises

Exercise 1 – Free writing

Take one of the pictures below and use this as a prompt to start writing. Write continuously for **five** minutes or until you fill the page. It doesn't matter what you write and you don't need to worry about sentence structure, grammar or spelling.





Some prompts to get you started:

“What could be happening?”

“What is going on around them?”

“Why are they doing this?”

“What do they look like?”

“What might happen next?”

Space for free writing:

Exercise 2 – Writing about an experience

Think about an event or activity that you could learn from - it doesn't matter if it went well or if it went badly. Use the prompts below to write a short reflective piece on the activity.



Looking back at the activity reflect upon:

- Your expectations before embarking on the activity
- How you approached the activity
- Which parts of the activity you found easy/hard

Think about what you learned as a result of participating in the activity:

- How did your knowledge and understanding change?
- What would you do differently if faced with a similar situation in future?

Consider how the learning activity might be tested in the future:

- How might you go about putting into practice what you've learnt?
- What challenges might you encounter?
- How would you go about dealing with such challenges?

It doesn't matter what you write and you don't need to worry about sentence structure, grammar or spelling.

Space for reflective writing:

Top tips for reflective practice



Below are some top tips for reflective practice. Feel free to add any more tips you might want to remind yourself of at the end.

Time spent on reflection is an investment

Making time to do something as abstract as reflection can sometimes seem like a waste of time but you need to look at it as time well spent for the future. Being a reflective practitioner can help you deal with situations, improve your performance and contribute to your overall wellbeing.

Reflection doesn't have to focus on the big things

You can reflect on anything that happens to you whether at work or outside. Only you can judge how much of an impact an event or situation has on you so you will be able to devote the appropriate amount of reflection time. Reflecting on the small things that happen can be a nice way to ease into being a reflective practitioner.

Choose the method that works for you

Reflective practice is a very personal thing and there is no right or wrong way to approach it. Whether you keep a written diary or devote five minutes on your train ride home to thinking about your day the important thing is that the reflection helps you.

Mini reflections on the workshop

This section gives you a chance to briefly reflect on the course and make plans for including reflective practice in your work in the future. These reflections are for you personally to complete either at the end of the course or after a little thinking time.

What is the top lesson you will take away from today?

Have you found a method of reflection that you think would work for you?

Will you change anything in your practice as a result of taking this course?

Feel free to note down any other reflections

Bibliography

Below are some useful resources on being a reflective practitioner.

Bassot, B. (2016). *The reflective practice guide: an interdisciplinary approach*. Abingdon: Routledge.

Bolton, G. (2014). *Reflective practice: writing and professional development*. London: Sage.

Driscoll, J. (ed.). (2007). *Practicing clinical supervision: a reflective approach for healthcare professionals*. Edinburgh: Balliere Tindall.

Gibbs, G. (1998). *Learning by doing: a guide to teaching and learning*. Oxford: Further Education Unit.

Illingworth, E. (2012). Thing 5 – Reflective practice [CPD25].
<http://cpd23.blogspot.co.uk/2012/05/thing-5-reflective-practice.html>

Kolb, D. (1984). *Experiential learning: experience as the source of learning and development*. Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall.

OpenLearn (2016). *Learning to teach: becoming a reflective practitioner*. <http://www.open.edu/openlearn/education/learning-teach-becoming-reflective-practitioner/content-section-0>

Ronan, S. (2015). Thing 17: Reflective practice [Rudai 23].
<http://rudai23.blogspot.co.uk/2015/09/thing-17-reflective-practice.html>

Stone, D. & Heen, S. (2014). *Thanks for the feedback: the science and art of receiving feedback well*. London: Portfolio Penguin.