

Reflective Practice



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By three methods we may learn:
first, by reflection, which is the noblest;
second by imitation, which is the easiest;
third by experience, which is the bitterest.

Life is really simple, but we insist on making it
complicated.

Confucius



Aims & Learning Outcomes

- Explore what we mean by RP
- Look at different approaches to RP
- Improve personal understanding of reflective practice
- Show how theory can be applied to practice

Experience based learning

- Experience-based learning - where learners analyse their experience by reflecting, evaluating and reconstructing it (either individually, or in groups collectively) in order to draw meaning and understanding from it in the light of previous experience.
- Reflection is about making sense of a situation and its outcomes. Builds on previous learning that we all uniquely have – so it is different for different people and different for the same person at different stages of life.



Reflective practice

- A way of studying your own experiences to improve the way you work. It is very useful for health professionals who want to carry on learning throughout their lives. The act of reflection is a great way to increase confidence and become a more proactive and qualified professional.
- The ability to reflect on one's actions so as to engage in a process of continuous learning. According to one definition it involves "paying critical attention to the practical values and theories which inform everyday actions, by examining **practice** reflectively and reflexively.



Reflective Practice

- Objective and systematic approach to improving the ease and effectiveness of our way of working:
 - tool for self-empowerment
 - dependent on time spent on activity
 - to see how well we have learned, adapted and implemented effective patterns of behaviour
- Draws us into revealing and critically examining the values, assumptions, ideas, theories, and strategies supporting our behaviour patterns, lifestyle or professional decisions and skills
 - process or clarification
 - may reveal discrepancies between intentions, values and actions
- Leads to increased personal effectiveness
 - benefits to service



Gibb's Model for Reflection

Gibbs' model of reflection (1988)



Elements of the Reflective Process

(Roth 1989)

- Keeping an open mind about what, why and how we do things
- Awareness of what, why and how we do things
- Questioning what, why and how we do things
- Asking what, why and how other people do things
- Generating choices, options and possibilities
- Comparing and contrasting results
- Seeking to understand underlying mechanisms & rationales
- Viewing our activities and results from various perspectives
- Asking “what if ...”
- Seeking feedback and other peoples ideas & viewpoints
- Using prescriptive (advice) models only when carefully adapted to the individual situation
- Analysing, synthesising, testing
- Searching for, identifying and resolving problems



Approaches for Reflective Activity



Reflective Approach

Focuses on a willingness to self-criticise

- 'taking stock'
- review of past learning
- review of daily practice
- identifying problem areas
- identifying key issues for future
- devise action plan for learning

Reflective Activity

- Reflection-in-action
 - ‘hands-on’
 - where do we go from here?
 - tuning in and going with the flow

- Reflection-on-action
 - Retrospective (free from urgency or pressure)
 - how was it?...
 - empowered by feedback, other’s ideas

4 Step Protocol ("DATA")

Peters 1991

1. **Describe:** the basic elements of the problem, task or situation
2. **Analyse:** identify assumptions, beliefs, rules, motives, other factors underlying current approach
3. **Theorize:** what alternatives are possible?
Advantages & disadvantages
4. **Act:** try out the new approach, evaluate results



Learning Contracts

- consider learning objectives of exercise
- strategies and resources available
- What evidence is to be produced to prove achievement
- criteria for assessment

Critical Incident Analysis

- something which causes a person to pause and contemplate the events that have occurred to try to give them some meaning.
- interpret as a problem or a challenge in a particular context, rather than a routine occurrence.



Action Learning Sets

- review experiences as a group
- generate focussed discussion of issue raised
- emphasis on reflection & effective action
- propose way forward

Learning Partners/Critical Friends

- exchange of ideas
- discuss general aspects of learning
- deliberate ideas/comments to deepen reflection

Recording Reflective Practice



Reflective learning statement

- Why did I choose an activity?
- What was I hoping to achieve?
- What learning did I undertake – preparation/during?
- Was it a useful exercise or not?
- Has this changed my working practice?
- How relevant is it now/for the future?
- Is there a follow-up to this?

Critical incident reflective statement

- What was the incident in which I was involved?
- What was my role ?
- What were the contributing factors?
 - circumstances relevant to me (pressure of work, lapse of concentration, lack of training)
 - external factors (other people, distractions)
- Has anything been learned from this incident?
 - on a personal level
 - team/organisational level
- How can this be applied/taken forward?
- What are the possible impacts on patient care?



Reflective learning log

- accumulation of material based on the your own processes of reflection
- written throughout the learning process – not 'in one go' at the end.
- combination of a logbook and diary of your feelings

- to reinforce and deepen you learning
- to foster problem solving skills
- to encourage you to understand the processes involved in project-based learning
- to help you articulate your skills development throughout the life of the project



Reflective learning log

You can describe:

- observations of events as they happen and over time
- groups progress and your contribution
- behaviour, your own and that of other group members
- your feelings or reactions
- your thoughts associated with events
- drawing/illustration/'mind maps'
- difficulties or issues of concern
- how you overcame these – the act of writing helps clarify thinking and develop solutions
- what you have learned from this
- how you plan to move on to achieve your targets



Putting reflection into practice



Activity 1

Pre-Registration Training



Elements of the Reflective Process

1. Awareness of what, why and how we do things
2. Seeking to understand underlying mechanisms & rationales

e.g. Registered Practitioner training



- **What has to be learned?**
 - academic knowledge
 - clinical placement skills and application of theory to practice
 - professional knowledge/attitude
- **How does it apply to my scope of practice?**
 - Competence: knowledge, skills and attitude
- **How do I evidence this?**

Benefits of Reflective Practice (Registered Practitioner)

- Develops professional thinking
 - knowledge of the what, why and how.
 - bridges gap between theory and practice
 - recognition of transferable skills
- Opportunity to identify & record progression

Activity 2

Post-Registration Training



Elements of the Reflective Process

3. Comparing and contrasting results
4. Questioning what, why and how we do things
5. Generating choices, options and possibilities
6. Viewing our activities and results from various perspectives

e.g. Specialist Practitioner training



- Learning post-registration
 - breadth and depth of specialism
 - Experience
- RP encourages critical thinking, questioning attitude and development of greater autonomy
 - new responsibilities
 - new interests

Elements of the Reflective Process

7. Analysing, synthesising, testing
8. Searching for, identifying and resolving problems
9. Asking “what if ...”

e.g. Training for Higher Specialist/Advanced Diplomas

- Higher level of specialist knowledge/expertise
 - explain, discuss, apply, problem solve
 - advanced theory applied to advanced practice/research



Elements of the Reflective Process

10. Keeping an open mind about what, why and how we do things

11. Asking what, why and how other people do things

e.g. CPD/Training Officer/Quality Manager

12. Seeking feedback and other peoples ideas & viewpoints

13. Using prescriptive (advice) models only when carefully applied to individual situation

e.g. Team Leader/Laboratory Manager



Activity 3

Training Officer



Reflective Process

- What am I trying to teach? (appraisal)
- What are my resources? (appraisal)
- How can I do it? (planning)
- Development activity (action)
- How do I measure success? (assessment)
- Feedback (review)

Considerations

- Level of knowledge & understanding
- Area of practice (narrow/broad)
- Level of skill (simple/complex/specialist)
- Level of supervision (direct/indirect)
- Range of clinical work

4-Step (DATA) Protocol - Describe

- Is this new to me? What do I need to know?
- Scope of practice of registered practitioner
 - based on JD, HCPC SoP
- Is clinical laboratory training during/after degree
 - expected level of knowledge
- Training manual
- Resources
 - guidance information
 - colleagues (who can help)
 - what time do I have?



- Analyse

- Support
- Institute/HCPC guidance
- Read HCPC standards of proficiency
 - ‘taking stock’
- How would you interpret them?
 - review of past learning
- Compare with IBMS registration training portfolio
 - review of daily practice
- Do you agree? If not, why not?
 - identifying problem areas



- Theorize

- How would you evidence your own scope of practice?
 - identify key issues
- How does this relate to pre-registration training?
 - devise action plan
- Transferable skills
- Collaboration?

- Act

- Identify areas for practice improvement and analysis of in-practice decision making processes.
- Does the evidence demonstrate learning & competence?
 - reflection in action
- Do you need to modify the evidence?
 - reflection on action

And finally

Activity 4

Yourselves



Qualities of a Reflective Practitioner

- Willingness to learn from what happens in practice
- Be open enough to share
- Motivated enough to 'replay' aspects of practice
- Belief it is possible to change
- Ability to describe in detail before analysing
- Belief there is no end-point in learning about practice
- Not being defensive
- Confident to act
- Honesty
- Recognising the consequences of reflection



The paradox of learning a new skill is that you cannot at first understand what you need to learn;
can learn it only by self-directed education and can educate yourself only by beginning to do what you cannot understand

Schön 1987





“Promoting and developing
biomedical science
and its practitioners”

