

Study Skills Series



Models for reflection

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BORTON'S MODEL OF REFLECTION

This model is ideal for:

- 1) Students/practitioners wishing to develop reflective writing skills for the first time.
- 2) Short reflective commentaries of less than 500 words
- 3) Reflections which do not focus on one specific experience or incident ie a reflection on the learning and development the individual has achieved in the past year.

The elements of the model

1) What?

This is the descriptive aspect of your reflective Writing. This should succinctly describe what has happened, what you and others have been doing.

• TIPS

Keep this section brief; there is always a temptation to tell a long story. Only include enough details for the reader to gain a sense of what has happened to you.

2) So what?

This is where you use theory to help you make sense of what has happened in the situation you described and to consider what you could have done differently. Why did things happen in the way they did?

• TIPS

Spend some time reading around the issues you have identified in your analysis of the situation. Use the literature to help you consider different viewpoints, remember there is usually more than one way to interpret a situation. Keep the focus on yourself and your behaviour, as this is the one thing you can change and control.

3) Now what?

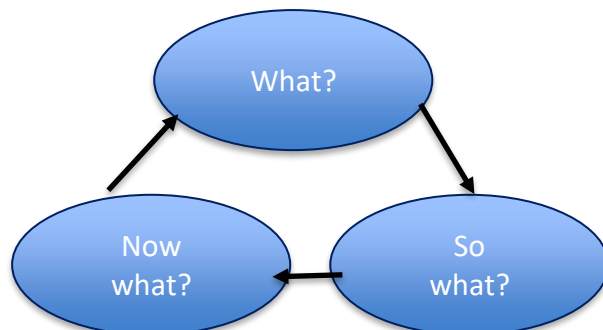
This is the section which requires you to think about what you are going to do next and what the consequences of your actions might be. You need to back this up with relevant literature.

• TIPS

Many students find this aspect of reflection the most difficult as it often involves some degree of change. This change will usually require effort on your part. It may involve challenging others or facing up to a painful insight into your own behaviours and motives. Reflecting on difficult experiences is never easy, you may want to ask a suitably prepared supervisor or mentor to help you work through the process. The reflective process should always end with some sort of development plan; any experience, good or bad, provides an opportunity for learning.

Reference:

Borton, T. (1970) *Reach Touch and Teach*, London: Hutchinson cited in Jasper, M. (2003) *Beginning Reflective Practice*, Cheltenham: Nelson Thornes.



GIBBS' (1988) MODEL OF REFLECTION

This model is ideal for:

- The novice reflector
- Students undertaking level 4/ certificate level studies

The elements of the model

Stage 1: Description of the event

The starting point is to write down, or tell someone else, a potted version of the event that you want to reflect on. The type of event that you select will depend on whether you want to share this with someone else or whether, at this time, you need to keep it to yourself. At this stage, it is important to get as much down about the event as you possibly can, and in as an objective a way as you can. Some of the things that you might want to include are:

- Where you are?
- Who else was there?
- Why were you there?
- What were you doing?
- What were the other people doing? What was the context of the event?
- What happened?
- What was your part in this?
- What parts did the other people play?
- What was the result?



Stage 2: Feelings

At this stage you try to recall, and explore, the things that were going on inside your head. These are often the things that cause us to feel happy, or dissatisfied with the event, and why it sticks in our mind in the first place. This is also the stage which you might find difficult to share with other people. Some questions that are useful here are:

- How were you feeling when the event started?
- What were you thinking at the time?
- What were you thinking about when it happened?
- How did it make you feel then?
- What did other people's actions/words make you think?
- What did these make you feel?
- How did you feel about the outcome of the event?
- What do you think about it now?
- List the emotions that you have gone through from the start to the finish of the event.
- Which of these is most significant or important to you?

Stage 3: Evaluation

When we evaluate something, we give it a value, or measure it against some sort of standard. What we are trying to do is to arrive at some sort of judgement about what has happened so that we can recognise all of its components, and not just those that are at the front of our minds when we think of it. So, the sorts of question that we might ask here are:

- What was good about the experience?

- What was bad about the experience, or didn't go so well?

Stage 4 Analysis

This means to break things down into their component parts' so that they can be explored separately. So we need to ask for detailed questions about the answers to the last stage. We might ask such questions as:

- What went well?
- What did I do well?
- What did others do well?
- What went wrong, or did not turn out the way I thought it should?
- In what ways did I contribute to this?
- In what ways did others contribute to this?
- Why might these things have happened?

Stage 5: Conclusion

This differs from the evaluation stage in that now you have explored the issue from different angles and have a great deal more information on which to base your judgement. It is here that you are likely to develop insight into your own and other people's behaviour in terms of how they contributed to the outcome of the event. Sometimes this is difficult, because we may realise that the way we handled an event, or our part in it, might not have been the most effective way of going about things, this, however, is exactly the point! Remember, the purpose of reflection is to learn from experience. Without the detailed analysis and honest exploration that occurs during these stages and therefore valuable opportunities for learning can be missed. Gibbs suggests that we ask ourselves what we could have done differently as part of this stage.

Stage 6: Action plan

At this stage you are invited to think yourself forward into encountering the event again, and to plan what you would do- would you act differently, or would you be likely to do the same again?

Gibbs' cycle stops here, with anticipated action. The cycle is completed tentatively by suggesting that the next time the event occurs it will be the focus of another reflective cycle.

References

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

Questions taken from:

Jasper, M (2003) *Beginning reflective practice*, Cheltenham, Nelson Thornes.

JOHN'S REFLECTIVE FRAMEWORK

The following framework is based on a blend of John's model of structured reflection published in Johns, (1994 cited in Palmer et al 1994, p113) and the 15th edition which is detailed in Johns (2009).

This model is more sophisticated and is ideal for:

- 1) The experienced reflector
- 2) Those wishing to reflect at 'degree level'

The elements of the model

1) Bring the mind home

Take time out to prepare to reflect by choosing a quiet moment to think! This is not easy but is essential for effective reflection.

2) Description of the experience

Provide a brief summary of the experience; identifying the background factors and issues which contributed to the experience.

3) Reflection

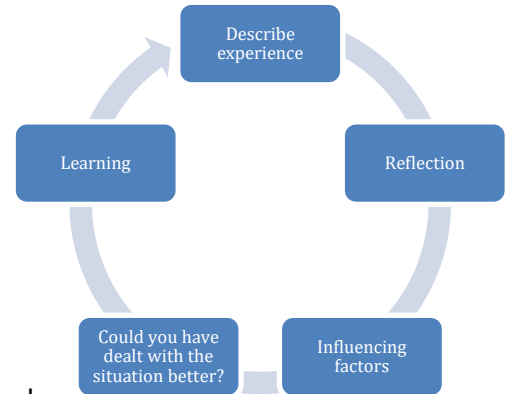
- What are the key issues you need to reflect on?
- What were you trying to achieve?
- Why did you intervene as you did?
- Did you respond effectively?
- How were you feeling and why did you feel this way?
- How were others feeling and how do you know this (what made them feel that way)?
- What were the consequences of your actions for:
 - The patient/service user
 - Others
 - Yourself?

Influencing factors

- What factors influenced the way you were feeling, thinking and responding?
- What knowledge did or could have informed you during this experience in terms of;
 - Empirics or scientific knowledge
 - Ethics or moral knowledge
 - Personal or self-awareness
 - Aesthetics or professional artistry (this is the practice knowledge which develops with experience)?
- To what extent did you act in tune with your values?
- How does this situation connect with previous experiences?

Could you have dealt with the situation better?

- How could you respond more effectively if this situation happened again?
- What are the consequences of alternative actions for the patient, others and yourself?



- What factors might constrain you from acting in new ways, what is stopping you from developing and changing?

Learning

- How do you now feel about the experience?
- Are you able to support yourself and others better as a consequence of this experience?
- Are you able to realise desirable practice?
- How has your knowledge developed as a result of this experience?
- What is your plan for future action?

REFERENCES

Johns, C. (2009) *Becoming a reflective practitioner*, 3rd ed. Oxford: Wiley Blackwell.

Palmer, A., Burns, S. and Bulman, C. (1994) *reflective practice in nursing*. Oxford: Blackwell Scientific Publications.

SMYTH'S MODEL OF REFLECTION

Smyth (1989) designed a framework to enable practitioners to critically reflect on their practice in order to affect emancipatory change. Derived from critical social theory this model provides the reflector with the opportunity to question practice at a more fundamental, socio-political level. This model is suited for:

- The more experienced reflector
- Experiences which involve issues associated with power imbalances between the individuals involved. This is particularly relevant for oppressed groups.
- Situations where the reflector may feel disempowered or unable to develop or change.

The elements of the model

Describe

What did you do?

Make a brief description of the experience

Inform (analysis)

What does this mean?

Analyse the situation using relevant theory to support the analysis.

Confront (self-awareness)

How did I come to be like this?

Consider how past experiences, your values, your education and upbringing have shaped you as a person and a professional?

Reconstruct (evaluation and synthesis).

What do your practices say about your assumptions, values and beliefs?

Where did these ideas come from?

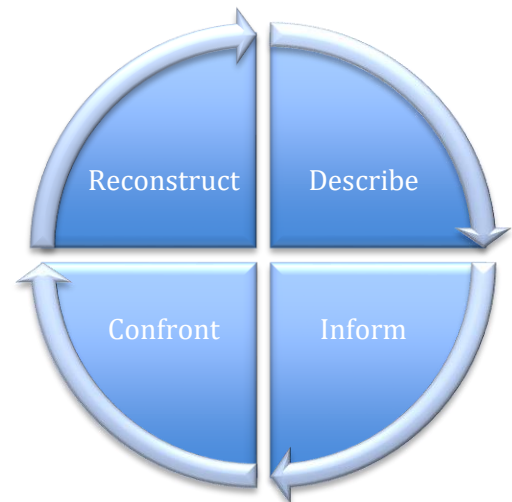
What social practices are expressed in these ideas?

What is it that causes you to maintain your theories and ways of thinking?

What views of power do they embody?

Whose interests seem to be served by your practices?

What is it that acts to constrain your views of what is possible in your practice?



References

Smyth, J. (1989) developing and sustaining critical reflection in teacher education, *Journal of teacher education*, 40(2), pp2-9.

A REFLECTIVE MODEL FOR INTERPROFESSIONAL LEARNING

This model was designed by Zarezadeh et al (2009) to enhance interprofessional learning and collaboration. The model consists of 3 levels. This model is ideal for:

- Reflecting on experiences involving other members of the interprofessional team.
- Structuring reflections associated with interprofessional learning.

The elements of the model

1) The personal level

This level fosters self-awareness

- Who are you and what is your role?
- What does your role mean to you?
- How do you feel about your role and why?
- How do these feelings affect your thoughts and actions?
- How can do others see your role?
- How do others feel about you and how do you know this?
- What are your strengths and limitations?
- How can you use your strengths to address your limitations?

The personal level

The professional level

The interprofessional level

2) The professional level

This level fosters profession-specific attitudes and behaviours.

- What is your professional identity?
- What does being a professional mean to you?
- What are the basic assumptions of your profession?
- What are the boundaries/limitations of your profession?
- What are the outstanding/unique contributions your profession makes to the health and social care team?
- Where does your profession stand in the bigger picture of health and social care?
- How do you feel about this?
- What have you learned from this reflection?

3) The interprofessional level

This level fosters greater appreciation of the roles of the other team members, creating greater respect for their contribution.

- What other professional do you work with?
- What are their roles in the context of health and social care?
- What are the commonalities and differences between the professional groups?
- How important are their roles in the context of health and social care?
- What is their unique contribution to the health and social care team?
- How do you feel about their role and perceived importance?
- What can you learn from them?

- Have you learnt from them?
- What can you teach them about your role, your responsibilities and yourself?
- Have you taught them anything?
- What can you learn together?
- What can you do together?
- What is your shared mission?
- What do they think about you and your professional group?

References

Zarezadeh, Y., Pearson, P. and Dickinson, C. (2009) A model for using reflection to enhance interprofessional education, *International Journal of Education*, 1(1) available from www.macrothink.org/ije, accessed 02/09/11

MEZIROW'S REFLECTIVE MODEL

Mezirow (2000) has produced a model consisting of ten different elements which can lead to the reflector experiencing a change in perspective. Mezirow as a critical theorist believes individuals can be inhibited from growth and development by the mental frames of reference they use to help them make sense of the world. Mezirow's framework is a useful tool to help the learner challenge their assumptions, values and beliefs and in so doing consider alternative views and new ways of behaving. The model goes on to help the learner to develop an action plan which may involve the acquisition of new skills and knowledge to enable them to adopt different roles and ways of behaving. The final element of the model requires the learner to try out these new roles and behaviours, gain feedback and then to embed their new perspective in the way they view the world.

The elements of the model

Framework:

Phase 1 A disorienting dilemma - an experience which makes you question your usual way of viewing the situation

Phase 2 A self-examination with feelings of guilt or shame - realise that you may have been judgemental or making assumptions based on a narrow perspective of the situation

Phase 3 A critical assessment of epistemic, sociocultural, or psychic assumptions - What assumptions have you made, what are the bases of these assumptions, how were they shaped?

Phase 4 Recognition that one's discontent and the process of transformation are shared and that others have negotiated a similar change - one is not alone in experiencing these revelations and recognising the need to change the way the situation is viewed

Phase 5 Exploration of options for new roles, relationships, and actions - what needs to change in order to see new perspectives and develop new ways of behaving?

Phase 6 Planning of a course of action to bring about change in self.

Phase 7 Acquisition of knowledge and skills for implementing one's plans

Phase 8 Provisional trying of new roles - test out new ways of behaving

Phase 9 Building of competence and self-confidence in new roles and relationships

Phase 10 A reintegration into one's life on the basis of conditions dictated by one's new perspective - in other words fully embed the new way of perceiving and behaving in one's personal and professional life.

This framework is ideal for the more experienced reflector and is useful for those wishing to challenge their assumptions, views of the world and habits of thinking.

References:

Mezirow, J. (2000). *Learning as transformation: Critical perspectives on a theory in progress*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass

THE CORE MODEL FOR CRITICAL REFLECTION

This model was designed by Cottrell (2010) to facilitate a higher level of reflection in order to generate a deeper level of understanding of a situation/event. This model would be ideal for the more experienced reflector including those undertaking postgraduate studies.

The elements of the model

Evaluate

This section is designed to identify why you have chosen this experience, event, topic or issue. You need to ask yourself the following:

- Does this provide enough of a challenge – have I chosen an easy option?
- Is it too challenging- am I too close to the situation and emotionally affected to address this as part of an assignment?
- Am I ever likely to be in a similar situation again, if not what will I gain from focusing on it now?

Reconstruct

In this section you will describe what happened during the event/experience. You need to ask yourself the following:

- What was I aiming to achieve, what I said or didn't say or do?
- Did this work out as expected?
- How did I feel when it happened and how did I respond?

Analyse

Examine your thoughts from a variety of angles. Compare your emerging findings with those expected from the literature and what is considered to be current best practice. This is an opportunity to develop self-awareness, by challenging your motives and view point.

You need to ask yourself the following:

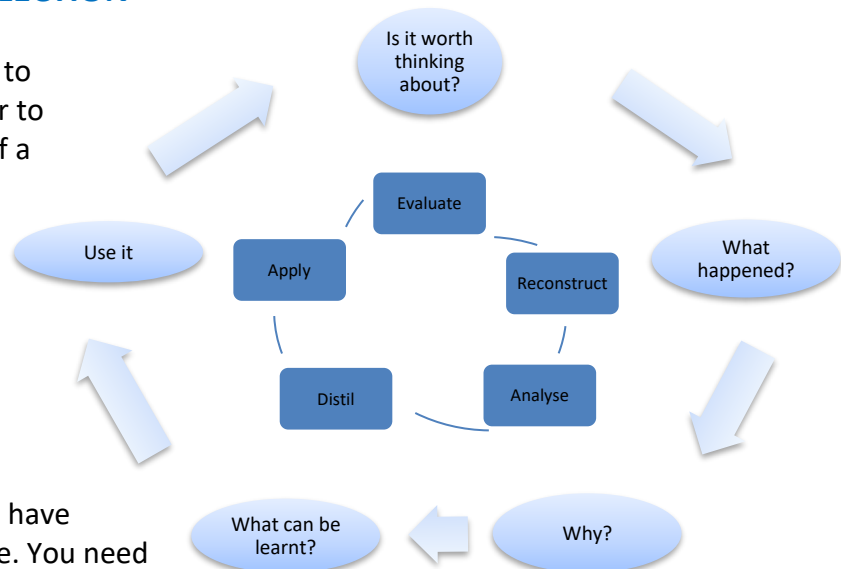
- Which action and omissions are most important in the way that events unfolded?
- What were the consequences of the difficult or unexpected feelings?
- What theories/literature can help make sense of what happened?
- Were there deeper roots to what appeared to happen at the time?

Distil

Your analysis should have generated many thoughts. Draw out the most relevant and synthesise these into a workable set of ideas or conclusions.

You need to ask yourself the following:

- What worked well that I could use in the future?



- What were the trigger points? How could I manage them differently in the future?
- How does my way of managing them help or hinder the desired outcome?

Apply

How are you going to make use of what you have learnt before you forget it? How will you bring others along with you to support you to do things differently?

You need to ask yourself the following:

- To what types of situations will I apply the insights that I have found here?
- What support will I need?
- Who else needs to be on board and how will I persuade them of the benefits?

References

Cottrell, S. (2010) *Skills for Success: the personal development planning handbook* 2nd Ed Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan cited in Cottrell, S (2011) *Critical Thinking Skills: developing effective analysis and argument* 2nd Ed Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan