

Reviewing own practice and evaluation

This handout will cover:

- Why review your practice?
- Using questionnaires and surveys
- Gaining feedback from others
- Self-evaluation
- What is reflective practice?
- A straightforward method of reflection (EDAR)
- Areas for improvement
- Personal development
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Why review your practice?

Reviewing your practice will help you identify any problems or concerns, enabling you to do things differently next time.

- To evaluate the effectiveness of your practice.
- To improve the learner experience.
- To enable you to personally develop and improve.

You should never assume everything is going well just because you think it is. The review process should take into account the views of learners and others you come into contact with.

You can review your practice by:

- Talking to learners: formally and informally
- Asking for feedback from others (i.e. colleagues, managers, mentors, peers, workplace supervisors, learning support workers, teaching assistants and volunteers)
- Carrying out self-evaluation
- Reflecting on your practice and/or writing a learning journal or keeping a diary
- Using questionnaires and surveys

Talking to your learners informally will help you realise how successful your session has been. This can be done during tutorial reviews, at break times, or before or after your sessions. Your learners are the best judges of whether they are getting what they feel they need. If given the opportunity, they may give you more feedback in an informal situation.

Using questionnaires and surveys

When issuing questionnaires or using online surveys, decide whether you want the responses to be anonymous, as you might gain more feedback if learners know they can't be identified. Always give a date for their return, otherwise people will take their time and then might forget. The response rate is not usually high when people are left to complete them in their own time. Therefore, if you can allow time during a session for your learners to complete them, you should receive a higher response.

You might decide to use a mixture of open and closed questions when designing your questionnaire. Open questions always require a full response and give you *qualitative* data to work with, i.e. quality feedback. Closed questions obtain only a yes or no answer and give you *quantitative* data, i.e. enabling you to add up the quantity (number) of responses. If you use a closed question, try and follow this up with an open question to enable you to obtain further qualitative information. It might take longer for you to read and analyse the responses, but you will have something more substantial to help with the evaluation process.

Example questions:

- Did you receive a detailed assessment plan? YES/NO
- Was the assessment activity as you expected? YES/NO
- Did you receive feedback? YES/NO
- Was your assessor supportive? YES/NO

Although these questions will enable you to add up the number of Yes and No answers, they would not help you to understand what it was that led to the responses. Learners might just choose YES to be polite. Adding up the number of Yes and No responses will give you *quantitative data*. Think of this as the *quantity* of something, i.e. in terms of the total number of Yes and No responses.

Improved questions:

- How detailed was your assessment plan?
- What assessment activity was used and why?
- How did you receive feedback?
- How supportive was your assessor?

The questions would be better rephrased as open questions to encourage learners to answer in detail. This would give you *qualitative data*, therefore giving you more information to act on. Think of this as the *quality* of something which gives you information to work with rather than just statistics. Using open questions beginning with *who, what, when, where, why* and *how* (WWWWW) will ensure you gain good quality answers.

If you would rather use closed questions with yes/no responses, you could ask a further question to enable the learner to elaborate on why they answered yes or no.

There are other ways to obtain *quantitative* responses, for example:

- Did the programme fulfil your expectations? 1 2 3 4 5

OR

- Did the programme fulfil your expectations? ☹️ 😐 😊

However, gaining *qualitative* feedback to back up the responses will give you much more information to work with.

A closed question could also be followed by a response scale of 1-5. Learners could choose 1 being *no* or *low* up to 5 being *yes* or *high*.

Alternatively, you could give other options such as:

1. Strongly disagree
2. Disagree
3. Neither agree nor disagree
4. Agree
5. Strongly agree

Removing the middle option (i.e. having 4 instead of 5 options) prevents the middle one being chosen.

Gaining feedback from others

This can include:

- discussions with managers at appraisal and review meetings
- external inspection reports e.g. from Ofsted
- responses from news stories and social media, i.e. organisational newsletters, local press, online stories, reviews and comments
- internal and external quality assurance reports
- mentor and peer observation feedback.

Gaining feedback can help you review your progress and will help you learn about yourself and what you could improve. For example, how you react to different situations or learners, how patient you are and what skills you may need to develop. You might also decide you need further training or support to improve your subject knowledge, your teaching/assessing skills and/or English, maths and computing skills.

You could read your organisation's last Ofsted inspection report or awarding organisation's EQA report (if applicable) regarding the use of initial and diagnostic assessment, and how teachers plan their sessions. You could review the strengths and areas for improvement, relate these to your own practice and identify if you need to make any changes as a result.

Self-evaluation

Self-evaluation is a process of thinking about how you have performed and asking yourself questions to identify how you could improve. It also includes obtaining feedback from others. Reflective practice is a central part of self-evaluation.

What is reflective practice?

Reflective practice is a process of self-evaluation and is a good way of ensuring you are carrying out your role effectively. When evaluating your own practice, you need to consider how your own behaviour has impacted upon others and what you could do to improve.

There are many reflective practice theorists such as: Schön (1983), Brookfield (1995), Johns (2006), Kolb (1984), Gibbs (1988), Griffiths and Tann (1992), Lewin (1951), Ecclestone (1995), Tripp (1993) or others. At level 5, you will need an understanding of some of these.

A straightforward method of reflection (EDAR)

A straightforward method of reflection is to have an **e**xperience, then **d**escribe it, **a**nalyse it and **r**evise it (EDAR) (Gravells 2017). This method incorporates the WWWWW and H (who, what, when, where, why and how) approach and should help you consider ways of changing and/or improving.

As a result, you might find your own skills improving, for example giving more effective, constructive and developmental feedback to your learners. Part of reflection is about knowing what you need to change. If you are not aware of something that needs changing, you will continue as you are until something serious occurs. You may realise you need further training or support in some areas.

- **E**xperience – a significant event or incident you would like to change or improve.
- **D**escribe – aspects such as who was involved, what happened, when it happened and where it happened.
- **A**nalyse – consider the experience deeper and ask yourself how it happened and why it happened.

- **Revise** – think about how you would do it differently if it happened again and then try this out if you have the opportunity.

Areas for improvement

Once you have gained feedback and evaluated your practice, you might like to consider what you can personally do to improve.

Some aspects might include:

- an understanding of curriculum models such as linear, spiral, product and process
- an understanding of different programme models such as: bespoke; blended; distance and flexible
- knowledge of the different domains of learning and how objectives at different levels can be used
- how to incorporate a variety of teaching and learning approaches during a session
- updating of skills and knowledge regarding using existing and emerging technology
- how to support learners who have particular needs e.g. using assistive resources
- researching the advantages and disadvantages of formal and informal methods of assessment
- improving the way you make decisions and provide feedback
- evaluating the way you complete and file your records and documents
- improving the layout and content of the documents used, for example, scheme of work, group profile and session plan
- improving the way individual learning plans/action plans are agreed
- creating or updating an induction checklist
- researching new icebreakers to use
- considering different ways of agreeing ground rules
- managing time better.

Personal development

Once you have gained feedback and reflected upon your performance, you could create a personal development plan (PDP). This can help you plan various activities to address your areas for improvement. It can also help plan your continuing professional development (CPD)

Reading list

Brookfield S (2017) *Becoming a Critically Reflective Teacher* San Francisco Jossey-Bass

Moon J (2006) *Learning Journals: A Handbook for Reflective Practice and Professional Development* (2nd Edn) Oxford Routledge

Roffey-Barentsen J & Malthouse R (2013) *Reflective Practice in Education and Training* (2nd Edn) Exeter Learning Matters

Rushton I & Suter M (2012) *Reflective Practice for Teaching in Lifelong Learning* Maidenhead OU Press

Schon D (1994) *The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action* Farnham Ashgate Publishing

Gravells A (2017) *Principles and Practices of Teaching and Training* London SAGE Publications Ltd

Gregson M & Hillier Y (2015) *Reflective Teaching in Further, Adult and Vocational Education* London Bloomsbury Publishing

Roffey-Barentsen J & Malthouse R (2013) *Reflective Practice in Education and Training* London Learning Matters

Rushton I & Suter M (2012) *Reflective Practice for Teaching in Lifelong Learning* Maidenhead OU Press

Scales et al (2011) *Continuing Professional Development in the Lifelong Learning Sector* Maidenhead OU Press

Sellers M (2017) *Reflective Practice for Teachers* London SAGE Publications Ltd

Website list

Continuing Professional Development - <https://set.et-foundation.co.uk/professionalism/cpd/example-activities-for-your-cpd/>

CPD information and ideas - <https://www.anngravells.com/information/cpd>

Evaluation - https://www.betterevaluation.org/en/start_here/decide_which_method

Excellence Gateway Improving Teaching - <http://improving-teaching.excellencegateway.org.uk>

Questionnaire design - <https://tinyurl.com/mfqvc23>

Reading list for reflection and CPD - <http://www.anngravells.com/reading-lists/reflection-and-cpd>

Reflective practice - <https://www.cambridge-community.org.uk/professional-development/gswrp/index.html>

Surveys & questionnaires (free program) - www.surveymonkey.com