

## Theories, principles and models of reflection and evaluation

### This handout will cover:

- Reflective practice
- Evaluation
- Self-evaluation
- Reviewing own practice
- Kolb
- Schön
- Griffiths and Tann
- Brookfield
- Reading list
- Website list

*The text here is a brief introduction to a few theories and you are advised to research them further.*

### Reflective practice

Reflective practice is about becoming more self-aware, which should give you increased confidence. It is an analysis of your actions which should lead to an improvement in practice. It can be written down, or just thought through. It should become a part of your everyday activities enabling you to analyse and focus on things in greater detail. All reflection should lead to an improvement in practice.

However, there may be events you would not want to change or improve as you felt they went well. If this is the case, reflect as to *why* they went well and use your thoughts to improve future sessions. When evaluating your own practice, you need to consider how your own behaviour has impacted upon others and what you could do to improve.

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 WWWWH (who, what, when, where, why and how) approach and should help you consider ways of changing and/or improving.

You could use EDAR to help you reflect



- **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.

- **Analyse** – 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.

As a result of your reflective practice, you might find your 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 therefore partaking in relevant continuing professional development (CPD) should help. Maintaining a reflective learning journal or a diary can help this process.

## Evaluation

Evaluation is about measuring the effectiveness of something, for example, the way you teach and assess. To help you evaluate your practice, you can obtain data and statistics as well as feedback from learners and others. When analysed, this information can be used to help you improve your own practice, and the experiences of your learners.

Evaluation is a quality assurance tool for a product or a service. If you are delivering and/or assessing a qualification or a programme of learning, then that is the product. The facilities of the organisation and the support your learners receive relate to the service. Your learners should have the opportunity to evaluate the product and service at some point, perhaps by completing a survey.

Evaluation is not another term for assessment; evaluation is of the programme whereas assessment is of the learners. Evaluation should be an ongoing process throughout all aspects of teaching, learning and assessment.

Aspects which can be evaluated include:

- how effective was my planning and preparation?
- how well did I communicate with the learners and others?
- how effective were the delivery and assessment approaches I used?
- how did I stretch and challenge my learners?
- how effective were the resources, equipment and materials I used?
- how well did the learners perform i.e. did they achieve what they should have?

It can be done by:

- carrying out questionnaires and surveys with all involved
- analysing data and statistics such as enrolment, retention, achievement, destinations and progression
- analysing appeals and complaints
- talking to learners and others
- looking for trends or patterns to find out why things are occurring.

An important aspect of evaluation is self-evaluation.

### **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 to inform your questions. This can be by discussions, questionnaires, surveys, reviews and appraisals. You can use this information to consider how to review and update your practice.

### **Reviewing own practice**

If you can review each session after you have delivered it, you might begin to realise things you were not aware of. For example, you could ask yourself if you used eye contact with each learner and addressed everyone by name at some point during the session. If your answer is no then next time, ensure that you do.

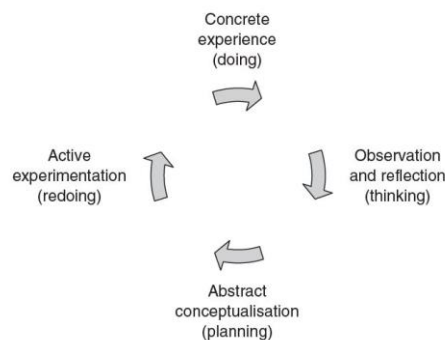
For example after delivering a session:

Did I....?

- state the aim and objectives of the session
- introduce myself and create a rapport with the learners
- use equipment/resources/handouts appropriately and effectively
- act confidently and professionally
- involve and include everyone during the session
- check that learning had taken place
- communicate clearly (verbal and non-verbal)
- ask open questions to check knowledge
- demonstrate subject knowledge
- use a variety of teaching, learning and assessment approaches
- take into account: health and safety, and equality and diversity
- refer to the aim and objectives
- summarise the session
- tidy the area afterwards

## Kolb

Kolb (1984) proposed a four-stage theory, known as the experiential learning cycle. 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. The cycle is a way by which people can understand their experiences, and as a result, modify their behavior.



- Concrete experience is about experiencing or immersing yourself in the task and is the first stage in which a person simply carries out the task assigned. This is the doing stage.
- Observation and reflection involve stepping back from the task and reviewing what has been done and experienced. Your values, attitudes and beliefs can influence your thinking at this stage. This is the stage of thinking about what you have done.
- Abstract conceptualisation involves interpreting the events that have taken place and making sense of them. This is the stage of planning how you will do it differently.
- Active experimentation enables you to take the new learning and predict what is likely to happen next, or what actions should be taken to refine the way the task is done again. This is the redoing stage based upon experience and reflection.

The cycle is based on the idea that the more often a person reflects on a task, the more often they have the opportunity to modify and refine their efforts. The process of learning can begin at any stage and is continuous, i.e. there is no limit to the number of cycles which can be made in a learning situation.

This theory suggests that without reflection, people would continue to repeat their mistakes. Next time you teach, you could relate an aspect of your teaching to each of the four stages of the cycle.

## Schön

Schön (1983) suggests two methods of reflection:

- reflection in action
- reflection on action

Reflection *in action* happens at the time of the incident, is often instinctive and allows for immediate changes to take place. It is about being reactive to a situation and dealing with it straight away.

Reflection *on action* takes place after the incident and is a more conscious process. This allows you time to think about the incident, consider a different approach or to talk to others about it before making any changes. It is about being proactive and considering measures to prevent the situation happening again in the future.

## Griffiths and Tann

Griffiths and Tann (1992) introduced a cycle of reflection with different time frames. The cycle begins with planning and ends with evaluation. They state that without a conscious effort, the most immediate reactions to experiences can overwhelm the opportunity for deeper consideration and learning.



The aspects go through five levels or time frames:

1. rapid reaction (immediate)
2. repair (short pause for thought)
3. review (time out to reassess, hours or days)
4. research (systematic, focused, weeks/months)
5. re-theorise/re-formulate (abstract, rigorous, over months/years)

## Brookfield

Brookfield (1995) identified the importance of being critical when reflecting. He advocated four points of view when looking at your practice which he called critical lenses. These lenses are from the point of view of:

- the teacher
- the learner
- colleagues
- theories and literature

Using these points makes the reflection critical, by first looking at it from your own point of view; secondly, how your learners perceived your actions and what they liked and disliked; thirdly, the view from colleagues, e.g. your mentor is taken into consideration. This enables you to have a critical conversation about your actions which might highlight things you hadn't considered. Fourthly you should link your reflections to theories and literature, comparing your own ideas with others' ideas.

### Reading list

Brookfield SD (1995, 2017) *Becoming a Critically Reflective Teacher* San Francisco CA Jossey Bass

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

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

Griffiths M and Tann S (1992) Using reflective practice to link personal and public theories *Journal of Education for Teaching* Vol 18 (1): 69–84

Johns C (2006) *Engaging Reflection in Practice: a narrative approach* Oxford Blackwell Publishing

Kolb DA (1984) *Experiential Learning: Experience as the source of learning and development* New Jersey Prentice-Hall

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Lewin K (1951, 1964) *Field Theory in Social Science* Harper and Row New York

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

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

Schön D (1983, 1991) *The Reflective Practitioner* London Temple Smith

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

### **Website list**

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

Evaluation - <http://www.businessballs.com/kirkpatricklearningevaluationmodel.htm>

Reading lists - <https://www.anngravells.com/reading-lists/index>

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

Reflection and CPD books - <https://www.anngravells.com/reading-lists/reflection-and-cpd>