



A workshop on Reflective Learning



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There is no restriction on any of the materials I am using – duplicate, modify.....whatever is useful to you.

Summary

- **Developing an understanding of reflection**
 - **Some vocabulary and definition issues**
- **Understanding what reflective learning is**
 - **A graduated scenario exercise (GP's Story)**
- **Using learning journals**
- **Assessment issues in learning journals or other reflective tasks**
- **A practical exercise to support reflection (dialogues)**



Some vocabulary of reflection

- **Reflection**
- **reflective learning**
- **reflective practice**
- **reflective writing**
- **secondary reflection**



Representation of reflection

- **we learn from the process of representing reflection**
- **we learn different things from different forms of representation**
- **using writing for reflection is useful as it produces an ongoing record**



A 'common-sense' definition of reflection

Reflection is a form of mental processing - like a form of thinking - that we may use to fulfil a purpose or to achieve some anticipated outcome. Alternatively we may simply 'be reflective', and then an outcome can be unexpected.

The term 'reflection' is applied to relatively complex or ill-structured ideas for which there is not an obvious solution and it largely refers to the further processing of knowledge and understanding that we already possess.

Emotion is involved in reflection in various ways.

There is an important depth dimension – it ranges from superficial to deep.



Reflection in a professional or academic context:

Reflection /reflective learning is likely to involve a conscious and stated purpose for the reflection , with an outcome that is specified in terms of learning, action or clarification.

The reflection may be preceded by a description of the purpose and / or the subject matter of the reflection.

The process and outcome of the reflective work is most likely to be in a represented (eg written) form and to be seen by others and may be assessed. These factors can affect its nature and quality.



'Harry stared at the stone basin. The contents had returned to their original silvery white state, swirling and rippling beneath his gaze.

"What is it?" Harry asked shakily.

"This? It is called a pensieve", said Dumbledore. "I sometimes find - and I am sure that you know the feeling - that I simply have too many thoughts and memories crammed into my mind."

"Er", said Harry, who couldn't truthfully say that he had ever felt anything of the sort.

"At these times", said Dumbledore, indicating the stone basin, "I use the pensieve. One simply siphons the excess thoughts from one's mind, pours them into the basin, and examines them at one's leisure. It becomes easier to spot patterns and links, you understand, when they are in this form".



Understanding what reflection is – a Graduated Scenario exercise

I use this exercise:

- to help teachers to understand factors that are involved in reflection;
 - to help learners to start with reflective tasks;
 - to help both by demonstrating the value of deepening of reflection.
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The deepening of reflection (shifts)

As reflection deepens, there are shifts:

- from description to reflective account
- from no questions to questions to responding to questions
- emotional influence is recognised, and then handled increasingly effectively
- there is a 'standing back from the event'
- self questioning, challenge to own ideas
- recognition of relevance of prior experience
- the taking into account of others' views
- metacognition - review of own reflective processes



Some purposes of journals

- To record experience
- To facilitate learning from experience
- To support understanding and the representation of learning
- To develop critical thinking or the development of a questioning attitude
- To encourage metacognition
- To increase active involvement in and ownership of learning
- To increase ability in reflection and thinking
- To enhance problem solving skills
- As a means of assessment
- To enhance reflective practice
- For reasons of personal development and self empowerment
- For therapeutic purposes or as a means of supporting behaviour change
- To enhance creativity
- To improve writing
- To improve or give 'voice' as a means of self expression
- To foster communication, reflective and creative in a group
- To support planning and progress in research
- As a means of communication between a learner and another



How we learn from reflection and journals.

We learn from

- the representation of learning
- working with ill-structured ideas

Journals enhance the conditions of learning

- give intellectual space
- enhance ownership
- facilitate metacognition (learning to learn)
- personally expressive material is good for learning

Journals help with emotional aspects of learning



Assessment of journals and reflective writing

- **Think what is the purpose/LO's**
 - **Product – an assessment of the learning?**
 - **Process - assessment of the ability to write reflectively?**

Assessment criteria must relate to the purpose described to learners



Dialogues Exercise

Dialogues may be with:

- People you know
- People you don't know
- Fictitious subjects (creative writing)
- Wisdom figures
- Social entities (political party...)
- Works (a painting, essay, thesis etc)
- A part of your body....
- The subject matter of research
- Anything! / anyone...