

# Models of reflective practice for education



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Reflective practice has particularly grown and expanded its field in different professional disciplines and contexts; each with their own differences and nuances (Thompson and Thompson, 2008). It is widely agreed that the intention of reflective practice is performance improvement, manifested through analyzing on strengths and the development of competence. However, Anderson (1996) highlights the fact that reflection in professional practice “ returns not what it is but what might be an improvement on the original.”

This essay examines the understanding of the reflective practice by using theories and models of reflective practitioners. The reflective examples and experiences is illustrated as a learning unit and an assessment tool including the approaches taken to integrate the reflective example as part of the work integrated learning experience.

## **2) MODELS OF REFLECTIVE PRACTICE**

There is a clear understanding of what reflective practice that identifies the attributes of a reflective practitioner (Thorpe, 2004).

The three main models are highlighted below:

### **3. 1) Jenny Moon (1999) Model of Reflection:**

Moon (1999) defines a “ common sense” reflection as “ a form of mental processing with a purpose and/or anticipated outcome that is applied to relatively complex or unstructured ideas for which there is not an obvious solution”.

Moon (1995, 1999) explains further by outlining the fact that differing views of reflection arises from outcomes of learning and material for further  
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reflection and action. It is widely agreed that the intention of reflective practice is the surface learning that define characteristics which does not involve reflection but points out the condition for reflection (Moon, 2001).

Moon (1999) takes a slightly different approach identifying five stages in learning called map of learning (Figure 2). To see that that learning has occurred, it is important to 'NOTICE'. It can be successful by getting to know the material as coherent 'MAKING SENSE' and the meaningfulness to develop a holistic view 'MAKING MEANING' which can be done by creating relationships of new material with other ideas 'WORKING WITH MEANING'. To ensure that the new learning has been transformed, it is necessary to 'TRANSFORM LEARNING'.

### **3. 2) Gibbs (1988) Model of Reflection**

John (2004) mentions that Gibbs (1988) in his model clarifies that reflective practice deals with practitioners to reflect on their normal way to thinking and responding within the given situation towards gaining insights into self and practice. Reflection alone is not sufficient but taking action is the solution. Therefore, one needs to put their learning, knowledge and new understanding into practice; allowing the reflective process to inform the practice (Jasper, 2003).

The work of Gibbs (1988, 1998) allows the reflective practitioner to analyze and evaluate the practice and make necessary improvements into their practice. Gibbs (1988) introduces experimental reflective cycle (Fig 3) comprising of six elements of reflection which shows a clear 'DESCRIPTION' of the situation, analysis of the 'FEELINGS', 'EVALUATION' of the experience,

' ANALYSIS' to make sense of the experience, ' CONCLUSION' and reflection upon experience to examine what you would do if the situation occurred again ' ACTION PLAN' (Fig 4).

### **3. 3) Kolb (1984) Model of Reflection**

Kolb (1984) identified and developed a theory of experiential learning that gives a constructive way to develop our practice. This process is called The Kolb Cycle or The Experiential Learning Cycle. Clark (2008) reports that the cycle consists of four different stages of learning from experience that can be penetrated at any stage. All four stages must be followed in sequence for successful learning to take place. The Learning Cycle recommends that it is not only sufficient to have a concrete experience " DO" in order to learn but also necessary to reflect on the experience " OBSERVE" to generalise and formulate concepts " THINK" that can be implemented to new situations. Hence, it makes it necessary for the learner to link between the theory and action by planning " PLAN", representing back to the theory (Fig 5).

## **3) REFLECTIVE EXAMPLES**

In this first part of the section is the reflection on the situation by using Gibbs (1988) Reflective Cycle which is a recognized framework for my reflection.

### **4. 1) PART 1 (THE ACCIDENT)**

During my summer holidays last year , my family and myself were at my brother's apartment enjoying ourselves and having a good time. My brother received a call from Bangalore, India, where his son, Saurav, studied. He disclosed that his son had met with a critical accident. I was shocked and difficult for me to gather my thoughts and comprehend the situation around

me. I had never been in a situation where someone close to me was fighting for his life.

Never being in a situation like this before I felt the need to follow someone or do something to keep myself occupied. I followed Pratima (sister-in-law) to the kitchen to make a tea for everyone present at the apartment. While in the kitchen I encountered awkward silence between us, feeling pressure of this silence, I intended to break the ice by approaching her to offer my support. Upon approaching her I noticed that she had a worried look on her face. She looked into my eyes and bursted out into tears. This outbreak of her emotions left me feeling even more awkward and I lost all sense of what to do or say. Hearing the sobs of Pratima, my mother came rushing into the kitchen and took control of her. I felt quite sad because of my nephew's accident and my own stupidity of not being able to handle my state of mind in an intense pressure situation.

Upon analysing this situation I should have known Pratima was feeling tensed and anxious. I should have prepared myself to give Pratima a bit more time alone, as well as I should have had someone with more experience to take control of the situation. But next time my action plan should be to control some of my anxiety and help them reduce their anxiety by showing a bit more empathy to someone who is feeling very emotional.

## **4. 2) PART 2 (PRESENTATION)**

The second part is the reflection on the situation by using Moon (1999) model of reflection.

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Prior to the beginning of my second academic year at the University I motivated myself to go and travel around England and India. Because of the nature of my travel I reached University ten days late. My inability to reach University on time took away some form of focus away from my action plan of being focused from the beginning. I did not feel like I was in the right frame of mind to undertake my studies seriously.

The first assignment was a presentation and a report writing for the first term in Business Strategic Analysis on Stakeholders and Shareholders interrelation. As I was lagging behind I spoke to Mr. Craig, my module leader, about my inability to focus upon the task. Mr. Craig encouraged me and spoke to me about the situation, this pep talk made me feel a lot better.

I have difficulty in doing presentations as I cannot seem to organize my ideas and thoughts in words. Most of the tutors have explained and demonstrated to us in the class as to how to present, but for some reason I get “butterflies in my stomach”, lose confidence and forget what I actually intend to speak when confronted by a large group. I practiced a lot and took help from youtube because the web-site has wonderful examples of tackling with Public Speaking issues.

My group helped me to structure my notes and allotted me my part for the presentation. I thought I could speak on the spot by revising a little bit on it. On the final day, my performance was satisfactory but I managed to convey what I intended to.

Our group got a B- in it but it was quite worth the experience. The audience understood what I spoke but I do not think I would do anything different next time as now I have the ability and confidence to enable myself to tailor my presentation and deliver satisfactory results.

### **4. 3) PART 3 (BASKETBALL SKILLS)**

The third part is the reflection on the situation by using Kolb (1984) model of reflection.

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During my second year, I decided to get myself involved with Sports, so I joined the University's Women Basketball Team. Before I got selected, I had to go through a selection session in the Sports Hall, where we were asked to form a team and play a friendly match. Though it was my first time experiencing it, I was not nervous at all because I had been playing basketball since childhood. The game started with a whistle blow. That game was 45 minutes long and it was the worst game I had ever played.

According to my observation, I did not perform up to my expectation. There were a lot of violation of rules during the game like fouls, travelling, double dribble, pushing, pulling and out of bounds. There was no team evidence during the match, only individual players playing to prove a point. At the end of the selection, I got selected to my own surprise as I believed I did not play to my maximum potential. One main talent that is required in the game is shooting skills. As basketball can only be won by points, if you cannot shoot,

you cannot win. I attempted to shoot 50 times but scored only 12 points.

This showed my weakness in shooting skills.

I had a word with the coach and the vice coach of the team about improving my shooting skills who provided me insights concerning scoring techniques.

The coach demonstrated to me the underlying techniques to shoot properly.

It gave me a brief idea as to how to shoot which helped to boost my confidence.

I plan to practice and improve my technique using insights from the coach as well as experience from the first match and plan accordingly for the upcoming match.

### **3) APPROACH TO REFLECTIVE PRACTICE**

According to my observation and experiences, I noted that reflective practice module has improved my skills of reflection to my practice with the

important intention of improving my professional practice. The assessment associated allotted during seminars and workshop has assisted me to

prioritize, evaluate and understand the work I already know and have done.

Experiencing the critique of a competence based approach while applying for placement jobs, I specifically measured and identified explicit learning

outcomes and competencies. Although the company applied in rejected me, my confidence and my advance understanding made more sense when

looking back at where I have been, what I did where different patterns begin to emerge.

In a session with my module tutors to discuss the feedback from my first term was satisfactory. Reflecting upon my overall performance in my work, I

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noticed that I require to develop my learning in my next upcoming assignment. Working with more confidence, having a set target and a new direction to work, may help me understand the profound knowledge that underlies. The learning gained enabled me to apply the skills of reflection to the CPD cycle (planning, action, evaluating and reflection) where planning to meet its requirement can improve and enhance other situations like my upcoming work in order to improve practice. In response to the learnings undertaken I sense a need to change or modify my practice like effective time management, recognize my current level of performance, more feedback and support and monitor and review progress.

Monitoring the process of working on my academic development plan via reflective practice has brought a vast difference in my study methods. When I look back at my performance during the past few years and assess my learning and development I have gained this year, I reflect situations where I found difficulties in completing my assignments, poor time management, preconception that it is difficult and honesty with self. Furthermore, Personal SWOT Analysis is worth commencing from the scratch in order to know your strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats so that you can act accordingly to improve the outcome of your performance.

#### **4) BECOMING A REFLECTIVE PRACTITIONER**

The standards required to meet the effectiveness of the practitioner are to evaluate the current and future requirements of the role, take account of the value and objectives of the organization (Race, 2002; Argyris and Schon, 1974), identify the areas of strength, and monitor the outcome of the work which can be enhanced upon. When I perform tasks, I need to reflect on it

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and think about WHAT happened, WHY it happened and HOW it happened which would make more sense to the understanding of the subject. It can be said that more explicit understanding and knowledge must be used in the practice. Schon (1987) argues that a practitioners' reflection can serve as a remedial to overlearning. Through reflection, I have understood that I could improvise on my the past repetitive experiences, and can add up to the situations which I may confront.

Our University provides us a booklet which gives us precise directions about what to include and how to present. As I do not devise my own records and presentation, it seems like an effort to record it would not do any harm and reflect the learning gained from the outcome later on. The development overtime would reflect and can enhance upon it.

Many students like myself are expected to take responsibilities for our own performance, drawing conclusions on the work on and how can it be improved. To make my reflection more effective, I think developing confidence in my own evaluation and judgement on my work will be more profitable rather than depending on the evaluations provided by tutors which results in developing critical and analytical thinking in future.

Understanding and using feedback appropriately is a vital achievement to improve practice. For instance, considering the difference between my own evaluation and the tutor's feedback assists in better reflection of work which is improvement in performance measurement.

## **7) CONCLUSION**

This study shows that reflective practice is a process of analyzing a given scenario and it can be improvised by decision making, based on the strengths and weaknesses that were observed from the evaluation. The introduction of the essay as a tool for reflection, coupled with the development of learning activities and resources should significantly develop skills in reflection in any field unit (Honey, 2000). The recognition that reflective practice has suggested is reinforced than seen as an innate ability (Loughran, 2002). The message trying to be conveyed is that the new found knowledge and learning from the the experiences should be implemented to future situations. It can be criticized that reflective practice does not free us from the need to worry about the mechanisms of professional accountability but also shows concern as how a professional may be transformed within a framework of accountabilty.