Reflective Practice

Guide and Workbook for Undergraduates

Contents

1.0   The purpose of the guide – what it sets out to do

The aim of this guide is to:
- Engage students in the reflective process to encourage professional and personal development
- Help you to understand the importance of reflection and help you to practise using various models of reflection
- Allow students to explore their work experiences and to make sense of them in the context of academic theory and contemporary thinking
- Assist students blend their structured learning experience with their unstructured experiences in life and their working environment

Learning is the mental oxygen for the professional and personal growth. Understanding our learning processes, reflecting on learning, analysing the outcome of our action and planning for action promotes personal learning.

This guide is designed for undergraduate intermediate year to encourage reflection not only from academic work but also from the workplace which may help develop links between academic theory and practice based learning. Additionally it is a resource for staff involved in supporting and developing students.

This guide has been prepared as a working document to support your learning through the process of reflection. You are encouraged to complete the activities which will enable you to find a style best suited to you in developing your learning for future career and employability.

The remainder of the guide is divided into the following sections:

Section 2   Skills assessment. By considering your current skills this will help you focus on your previous experiences in order to complete a personal SWOT analysis and facilitate a plan for improvement.

Section 3   The Learning Process. In which you consider your own learning style and understand how this can help with strategies for future development.

Section 4   Developing Reflection. Includes examples of how you may record your reflections by working through a number of activities to start you on this journey.

Section 5   Reflecting on coursework
Section 6   Reflection as a means of enhancing employability. This section enables you to consider why understanding how we learn and reflect is relevant to your module and your future employability.

The guide concludes with a summary of the role of key stakeholders involved, that is you, the tutor and the employer.

Reference is made to the QAA Benchmarks (http://www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/benchmark/statements/GeneralBusinessManagement.asp) which represent a comprehensive outline of the skills, and competencies required by a graduate which include: problem solving, decision making, communication, team working, cognitive skills, self awareness and self reflection among others.

We hope you find the guide of practical benefit. You can feedback any comments using the feedback sheet attached to the back of this booklet.

2.0   Where am I now?

2.1 Skills Evaluation

A good starting point is to consider your current skills level. The purpose of this activity is to help you audit your skills and provide examples of where and how you have developed the skill. There is also a blank box for you to complete for skills that are not listed but for which you have evidence of. You may find it helpful to refer to appendix one which has a further list of skills which you may consider.

For each of the on skills overleaf use the key to rate your current level from 1 – limited experience to 4 – a strength area. Answer as honestly as you can and provide examples from your workplace and your course.

	1	2	3	4	Justification
1. Limited experience of this 2. Able to do this with some help 3. Competent in this area 4. This is a strength area					
MANAGEMENT of SELF					
Use, evaluate and adapt a range of academic skills (analysis, evaluation, argument)					
Manage your time effectively (meet deadlines, get to appointments/classes on time)					
Set realistic objectives, priorities & standards					
Monitor, evaluate and adapt own performance					
Respect the views of others					
Take responsibility for acting in a professional/ethical manner					
Deal with criticism constructively					
MANAGING YOUR LEARNING					
Take responsibility for your own learning					
Monitor your own performance					
Set realistic targets and plan how these will be met					
Demonstrate an awareness of learning processes					
Select different methods of learning					
Use learning in new or different situations/contexts					
Seek information from appropriate people					

PROBLEM SOLVING					
Think laterally about the problem					
Identify options and suggest possible solutions					
Plan and implement a course of action					
Monitor evaluate and adapt solutions and outcomes					
Apply ideas and knowledge to a range of situations					
Take responsibility for individual and group decision making					
COMMUNICATION					
Present oral/visual information competently					
Listen actively and effectively					
Take part in a discussion, to put your own viewpoint across and to listen and respond to others					
Offer constructive criticism					
Speak fluently and confidently to a variety of audiences					
Produce a variety of written documents					
Use written documents to support your verbal communication					
Evaluate and adapt strategies for communication					

WORKING WITH OTHERS					
Plan work with others, agreeing objectives and responsibilities					
Respect the views and values of others					
Adapt to the needs of the group/ team (take initiative, lead, delegate, stand back, negotiate etc)					
Assist and support others in learning					
Negotiate with individuals/groups					
Work to collective goals					
Monitor, evaluate and assess processes of group/ team work					
DATA HANDLING					
Use appropriate sources of information (library, retrieval systems, IT, people etc)					
Use appropriate technology and media including IT					
Handle volumes of information and data effectively					
Record and interpret results / data					
Interpret a variety of information forms					
Use appropriate numerical information					
Evaluate and adopt strategies for handling data and information					

	1	2	3	4	Justification
1. Limited experience of this 2. Able to do this with some help 3. Competent in this area 4. This is a strength area					
Other skills (refer to appendix 1 for examples of skill types such as vocational/occupational skills)					

2.2   Knowing your strengths and recognising areas for development

The purpose of the activity is to enable you to consider those skills and personal qualities which you have developed through your experiences at college, University, work and socially in order to identify those which require further development. You may wish to discuss opportunities for development with your tutors or managers/supervisors at work.
Evaluate the results from the previous exercise to identify where your strengths and weaknesses lie and to consider ways in which you can develop those areas where you have limited experience

Personal Strengths	Evidenced by

Areas less developed	Opportunities for development

Remember this is not just about skills and abilities this is about personal competencies which may or may not be developed whilst pursuing a course of study, development or within the workplace but we use these skills in other aspects of our life for example coaching our children's football team or organising a charity event or even a day out or holiday.
In addition, make use of feedback from assignments, group activities and appraisal feedback to evidence, evaluate and support your statements.

Using a critical friend -   What do others think of your strengths and areas for development

Either in your course groups, social groupings or work teams be prepared to support your peers/ colleagues in evaluating their skills, personal and professional qualities and areas for development using the same template as above

3.0   Learning and Learning Styles

This section is to help you firstly consider how you learn and why it is important to understand your individual learning process; to then evaluate what you have learnt and finally record this in order to improve your knowledge and understanding of how we grow and develop in the workplace.
This section will provide you with some examples of how to record learning in your portfolio to support continued professional development.

3.1 Definitions of Learning

"The process of making a new or revised interpretation and meaning of an experience, which guides subsequent understanding, appreciation and action" Mezirow (1990)

Learning at work

Knowledge is generated through work and all workplaces are potential sites of knowledge production" Boud (2003 WBL a new HE?)

3.2 The Learning Process

How do we learn?

It is important to recognise how we individually learn before we embark upon the process of reflection. We all learn in different ways, some of us like to actively take part and learn from the experience whilst others like to read and prepare well before they learn. Honey and Mumford ( ) suggest that …..Kolb ( ) suggests that there
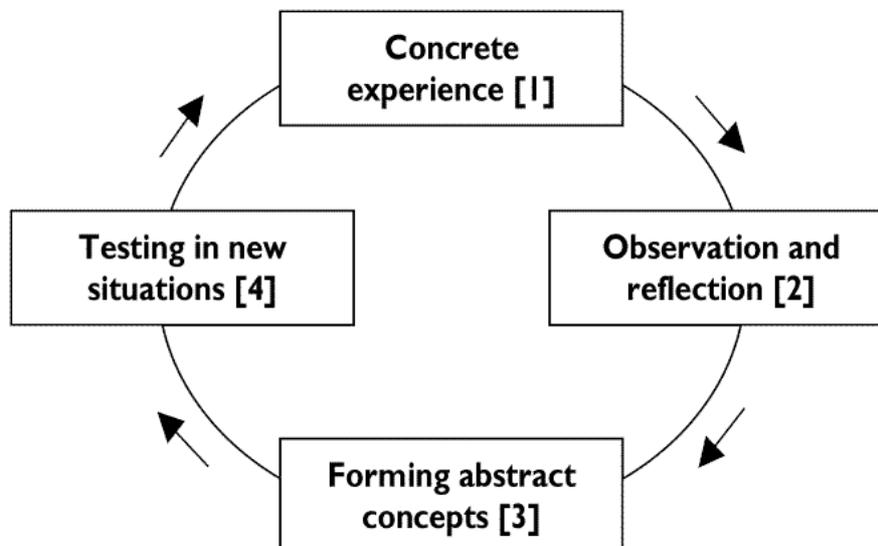
Kolb & Fry (1975)

Whichever way we learn an important stage in our learning is the process of reflection.

"Experience may underpin all learning but it does not always result in learning. We have to engage with the experience and reflect on what happened, how it happened and why. Without this the experience will tend to merge with the background of all the stimulants that assail our senses every day." Beard & Wilson (2006)

3.3 Learning styles according to Honey and Mumford

You will have probably already completed an activity that helps you identify your learning style preferences. This may have been Honey and Mumford a summary of which is included below.

Peter Honey and Alan Mumford have identified four main learning style preferences. By thinking about your preferred style, you can try and apply this to learning new things. If you're able to use your natural style, you're likely to find learning much easier and quicker.

Further details and an explanation of situations in which the styles best learn in found in appendix 2.

Reflector   **Theorist**

Activist   **Pragmatist**

Activists:
Activists like to be involved in new experiences. They are open minded and enthusiastic about new ideas but get bored with implementation. They enjoy doing things and tend to act first and consider the implications afterwards. They like working with others but tend to hog the limelight.

Reflectors:
Reflectors like to stand back and look at a situation from different perspectives. They like to collect data and think about it carefully before coming to any conclusions. They enjoy observing others and will listen to their views before offering their own.

Theorists:
Theorists adapt and integrate observations into complex and logically sound theories. They think problems through in a step by step way. They tend to be perfectionists who like to fit things into a rational scheme. They tend to be detached and analytical rather than subjective or emotive in their thinking.

Pragmatists:
Pragmatists are keen to try things out. They want concepts that can be applied to their job. They tend to be impatient with lengthy discussions and are practical and down to earth.

3.4 What is your preferred learning style?

Now you have considered your learning style, note in the table below what is your most dominant learning style with examples to illustrate when you have used this style. Consider the advantages and disadvantages for you of being aware of your learning style preference at a personal level and organisational level. You may find it useful to refer to the work of Honey and Mumford's learning styles detailed in appendix 2 to support this activity

Preferred Learning Style	Evidenced by	Advantages of using this style
		Disadvantages
Least preferred Learning Style	Evidenced by	Advantages of using this style
		Disadvantages

Consider the implications of this for you in the workplace

Action plan

4.0   Reflective practice

Reflective practice is an evaluative tool as part of the learning process associated with personal development and growth.   Having an experience does not necessarily mean that learning has taken place, it is only through internalising the experience that you can then begin to make sense of the experience in order for it to help with future action. This section aims to introduce you to a range of techniques to help you on your journey to becoming a reflective learner. It is also useful to consider what is not reflection and we have provided you with some examples of this to help you.

4.1 What is reflection?

What is Reflection?

"Learning from experience"
(Spalding, 1998)

"Thoughtful deliberation"
(Tickle, 1994)

WHAT IS REFLECTION?

"systematic, critical and creative thinking about action with the intention of understanding its roots and processes"
(Fish and Twinn,1997)
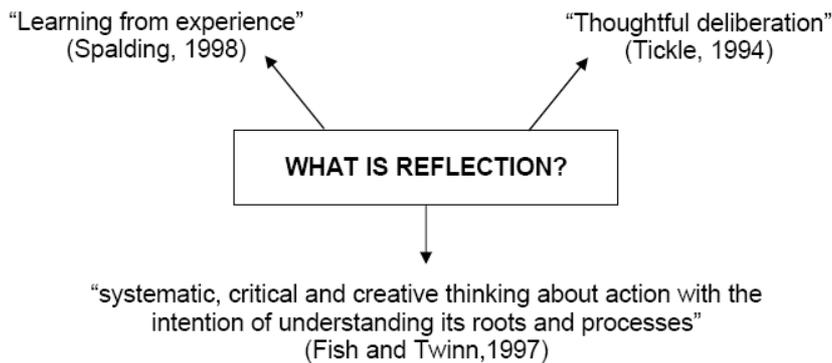
Reflective learning is the process of internally examining and exploring an issue of concern triggered by an experience which creates and clarifies meaning in terms of self and which results in a change conceptual perspective. Boyd and Fales (1983)

4.2 What reflective writing is not.
Reflection is **not:**
- Conveyance of information, instruction or argument in a report, essay or 'recipe';
- Straightforward description, though there may be descriptive elements;
- A straightforward decision e.g., about whether something is right or wrong, good or bad etc.;
- Simple problem solving like recalling how to get to the nearest station. Moon (2004)

Initially you may find yourself writing in a descriptive style, simply re-stating facts of the event. By using the frameworks within the workbook this should enable you to move from story telling to writing accounts of events which show what you have learnt and how you plan to take that learning forward

Reflective Processes – a model including skills required for reflection

Awareness of uncomfortable feelings and thoughts ◄——————— Self awareness

Description

Critical analysis of feelings and knowledge ◄——————— Critical Analysis

Synthesis

New perspective ◄——————— Evaluation
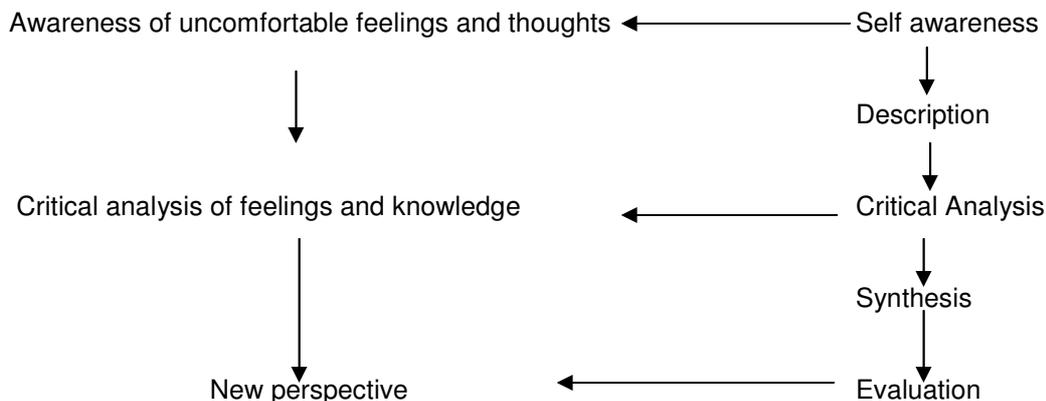
Source: Atkins, S. Murphy, K (1993)

4.3 Starting your reflective journey

Reflective Journals

Reflective journals are personal and unstructured (Bolton 2001) and contain stories, descriptions of events, personal anecdotes but should also contain deliberate thought and analysis. Often individuals find that keeping a personal reflective journal of events that happen either in the workplace or outside of the workplace helps them to reflect and understand situations, particularly as to why they happen and what they might have been able to do different to effect a more satisfactory result. Alternatively when things go well it is helpful to record this and work out why this was a positive experience and what can be learnt from this to transfer positively to other situations.

Sometimes these are called reflective logs or diaries but it is important to recognise that the journal should not simply be a personal diary or just a story but should explore your actions, feelings and the learning that was derived from the experience. A reflective diary can help us challenge our own beliefs and values and help us to clarify issues that are bothering us in order to deal with the issue and move on.

Moon (2006) provides a range of advice from Gibbs (1988) and Walker (1985) when maintaining your journal:

Make the journal your own	ensure the journal is 'an extension of yourself, not something outside of you' Walker (1985)
Be honest	'you can only learn from your journal if you have enough courage to face yourself as you really are' Gibbs (1988)
Let words flow	'Get down to it .. write, write, write …. Let it flow, uncensored and in whatever order it comes. It is very useful simply to write and then to reflect on what has been written' Walker (1985)
Use your own words	'use simple English that makes you realise exactly what you meant when you review your journal' Gibbs (1988) 'Say what you feel and if that makes you feel guilty, record that and work with it further' Walker (1985)
Dig deeper	'urge yourself to keep digging deeper and deeper so that you can understand and use your understanding' Gibbs (1988)
Be flexible	'do not be rigid in the way you keep the journal … be prepared to try different methods so that you can mould this exercise to your personal talents and needs' Walker (1985)
Write things up as soon as you can	'there is a very definite advantage in being able to record things as quickly as possible, even thought one may not immediately write them up fully' Walker (1985)
Seek help if necessary	'feel free to seek help …. From others: fellow participants, or other people …' Walker (1985)

Source: Moon (2006)

Your journal can take any format that you prefer – handwritten, audio recorded, electronic through the personal section of your e-portfolio or personal blog. Your preference may link to your preferred learning style.

Activity 1
Read the three extracts in Appendix 3 which provides some working examples of reflecting on an event. Using the table below, identify which sections of the accounts are reflective and list these under the appropriate heading. What does this tell you about reflective practice and how will you help you improve your own reflective journals. Your tutor or an academic skills tutor will then provide feedback for you.

The park 1	The park 2	The park 3

Action points to improve writing reflective journals

4.3 Developing deeper reflection

Levels of Reflection

Hatton and Smith (1995) suggest there are 4 levels of reflective activity. These are:

Descriptive writing   Describing an event or activity with no attempt at an explanation

Descriptive reflection   Reflecting on an activity with an attempt to provide a possible explanation

Dialogic reflection   Reflecting on the issue over time, inner dialogue, investigating various solutions and assumptions

Critical reflection   Considering the wide aspects including historical and cultural aspects

Initially, when starting the reflective writing process you may find yourself writing in a purely descriptive style. You should then re-examine your previous thoughts and writing in order to question further, understand what was happening at the time and thus move to the next level of the above scale.

At an undergraduate level, you will find with practice that you are able to move onto the second stage.

4.5 Models of reflection and activities

Two models of Reflective Practice are detailed below which you may find useful in your work. After the explanation of each model we suggest you complete the activity related to the model. These are of course not the only models and you may find something through your reading which you prefer to use.

4.5.1 Gibbs reflective cycle
Gibbs suggests it helpful to think of reflection in a cyclical manner whilst Rolfe provides us with a toolkit of reflexive practice. We would recommend you complete the activities on the following pages to develop your skills in using reflective practice to support deeper levels of learning.

GIBBS REFLECTIVE CYCLE

Description
What happened?

Feelings
What were you thinking and feeling?

Evaluation
What was good and bad about the experience?

Analysis
What sense can you make of the situation?

Conclusion
What else could you have done?

Action plan
If it arose again what would you do?
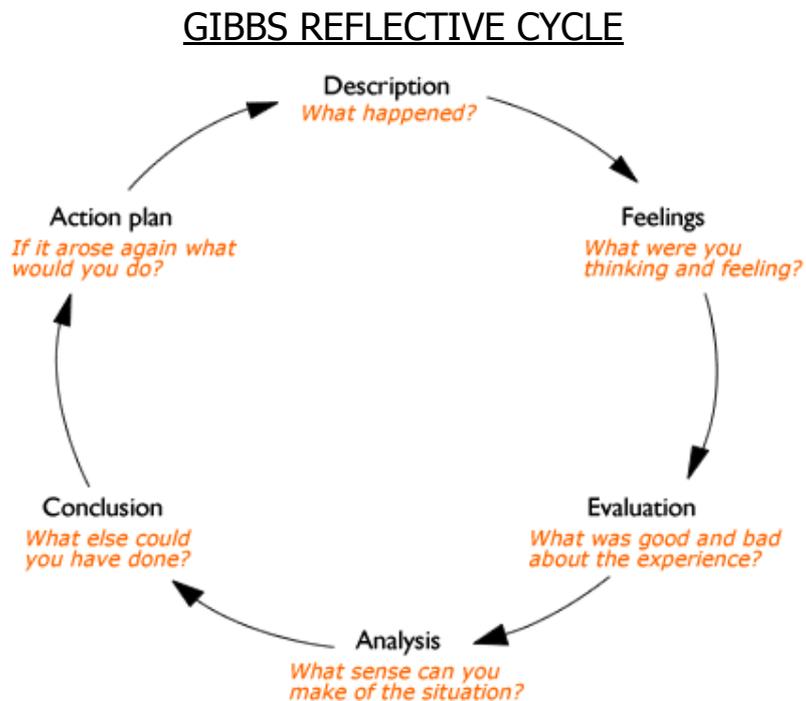
(Gibbs 1988)

Work through the activity on the next page to practice using this framework.

It may help to structure your approach by going through each of these stages and asking yourself the questions at each stage.

4.5.1.1 Activity 2

Looking back over your last working week, take one experience that stands for you, this can be either positive and negative, and using Gibbs reflective cycle: describe the event, explain your feelings at the time, evaluate and analyses the experience and finally draw up and action plan.

Event Description Set the context of the event for example where were you, who were there, what happened, what did you and others do?	
Feelings How you were feeling and thinking about; how did other people make you feel; how did you feel about the outcome of the event; what do you think about it now	
Evaluation Try to evaluate or make a judgement What was good about the experience and what was bad about the experience or didn't go so well	
Analysis what went well; what did you and others do well; what went wrong or did not turn out how it should have done; in what way did you or others contribute to this	
Conclusion It is here that you are likely to develop insight into you own and other people's behaviour in terms of how they contributed to the outcome of the event	
Action Plan Encountering the event again, what you would do – would you act differently or would you be likely to do the same? Why?	

4.5.2 Rolfe et al (2001) Framework for reflexive practice

Rolfe et al (2001) propose a framework that uses Borton's (1970) developmental model. The questions 'What? So what? and now what? can stimulate reflection from novice to advanced levels.

Descriptive level of reflection	Theory and knowledge - building level of reflection	Action-orientated (reflexive) level of reflection
What …	**So what**	**Now what …**
… is the problem/difficulty/ reason for being stuck/reason for feeling bad/reason we don't get on/etc., etc.?	…does this tell me/teach me/imply/mean about me/others/our relationship/ my attitudes/others' attitudes, etc.?	… do I need to do in order to make things better/stop being stuck/resolve the situation/feel better/get on better/etc., etc.?
… was my role in the situation?	…was going through my mind as I acted?	… broader issues need to be considered if this action is to be successful?
… was I trying to achieve?	…did I base my actions on?	… might be the consequences of this action?
… actions did I take?	…other knowledge can I bring to the situation?	
… was the response of others?	· experiential	
… were the consequences · for myself? for others?	· personal · scientific	
… feelings did it evoke · in myself? in others?	…could/should I have done to make it better?	
… was good/bad about the experience?	… is my new understanding of the situation?	
	… broader issues arise from the situation?	

4.5.2.1 Activity 3
Taking the same experience that you have explored through the Gibbs reflective cycle, now apply Rolfe's model.

Description level of reflection WHAT	Theory and Knowledge – building level of reflection SO WHAT?	Action Orientated (reflexive) level of reflection NOW WHAT?

4.5.3 Activity 4 Summarise your key learning points

What have I learnt from these exercises	What works for me and why

Action planning: what do I still need to know and what actions do I take forward

> "Reflection is a complex process which many learners do not find easy and facilitating learners' reflection requires sophisticated pedagogy" Walsh (2007)

What we can conclude from this is that the ability to write in a reflective manner is something that is developed over time and need

5.0 Reflecting on individual or group coursework
Activity 5

Reflecting on coursework should become a regular learning process whereby again you can use a framework for reflection in exploring what you have learnt, what you did well, what could be improved upon and what you will take forward. Work your way through the questions below in considering a recent piece of work that you have undertaken.

What did I actually achieve with this piece of work?
Which were the most difficult parts, and why were they difficult for me?
Which were the most straightforward parts, and why did I find these easy?

How well do I think I achieved the intended learning outcomes for this task?
Where could I have improved my achievement?
Why didn't I improve it at the time?

What have I got out of doing this assignment?
How have I developed my knowledge and skills?
How do I see the payoff from doing this assignment helping me in the longer term?

What else have I got out of doing this assignment?
Have I developed other skills and knowledge, which may be useful elsewhere at another time?
If so, what are my own emergent learning outcomes from doing this assignment?

What was the best thing I did? Why? How do I know?
What worked least well for me? Why did this not work well for me?
What have I learned about myself from this not having worked well for me?

Do I feel that my time on this assignment has been well spent? If not, how could I have used my time more sensibly? Which parts of the assignment represent the time best spent? Which parts could be thought of as time wasted?

What do I plan to do differently in future as a result of my answers to the above questions?
With hindsight, how would I go about this assignment differently if doing it again from scratch?
To what extent will this assignment influence the way I tackle anything similar in future?

What can I do to improve my performance when next meeting this particular sort of challenge?
What advice would I give go a friend about to start on the same assignment?
What pitfalls would I advise to be well worth not falling into?

Overall, how has this assignment helped (or hindered) my motivation to learn more about this part of my syllabus? Has it encouraged me, or disillusioned me?
To what extent has this assignment helped me to clarify what I need to learn about this topic?

Questions to consider before receiving feedback

How useful do I expect the feedback to be, that I receive on my efforts for this assignment?
What sorts of feedback do I really want at this point in time?
What sorts of feedback do I really need at this point in time?

Questions to consider after receiving feedback from the coursework

Has it been worth the effort I put in?
Do the marks represent a just reward?
Should this assignment be worth more or less marks in the overall scheme of things?

6.0   Why is this important for work based learning students?

The need to reflect upon the practice of work based learning and use the process to identify strengths, weaknesses and actions to be taken from your experience is relevant when seeking work. Through reflective practice you should be able to answer most effectively questions at the interview and create a good impression.

In the workplace, reflection may be stimulated by our response to specific situations; this might be triggered by particular feelings such as:

- Feeling uneasy about something
- Feeling something is not right
- Feeling that your existing knowledge is not appropriate
- Feeling you don't know what to do
- Feeling that you have to do something differently

Or this might be triggered by something significant that happened at work or even in class discussion about something that happened in the workplace. This is often known as a critical incident, such as:

- Something that went unusually well
- Something that went badly or lead to problems
- Something that you found especially demanding or challenging
- Something that made a difference in your work

Activity 6
Using one of the models suggested above (Rolfe or Gibbs) select one of the following subjects and write a reflective account of what happened, what you felt, what you did and what you have learnt from this feeling or critical incident that you would do differently next time.

A conflict	An extremity of emotion
A moment of joy	A dilemma
A misunderstanding	A celebration
As missed opportunity	A success

Event	
Reflective Account	

7.0 Reflection as a tool to help with employability

Achievement orientation
Maintains and inspires a results-driven approach, focuses on results and critical performance indicators.

- Recall an important goal that you were set in the past. What strategies did you use to achieve it? What was successful?
- Thinking about a difficult task you were required to undertake, what extra effort did you exert to achieve the goals set and accomplish a task?
- Can you recall a time when you were particularly effective on prioritising tasks and completing a project on schedule? How did you approach this and what was the outcome? What did you learn?

Analysis
Relates and compares data from different sources, identifying issues, securing relevant information and identifying relationships.

- What are your considerations when presenting a solution to a work issue?
- Think about a work problem you faced in the past, how did you go about finding a resolution?
- How would you identify appropriate data sources to inform your decisions?

Attention to detail
Accomplishes tasks through a concern for all areas involved, no matter how small.

- Consider a specific project or task you have undertaken in the past, how did you ensure details are were not overlooked?
- What checks do you put in place to ensure written work is correct?

Creativity
Generates and/or recognises how best practice and imaginative ideas can be applied to different situations.

- Think about a problem that you have solved in a unique or unusual way. What was the outcome? Were you satisfied with it?
- If you had an idea that you know may be considered unusual to your manager, how would you present it?
- Think about the most significant or creative presentation which you have had to complete. How did you approach it? What was the result?

Decisiveness
Makes decisions and takes action.

- What do you do when something needs to be done but no one is there to give you guidance?
- How do you go about getting agreement to a new idea?
- How do you make a decision based on incomplete information?

Influencing
Influences others by expressing self effectively in a group and in one to one situations.

- Describe a time when you were able to convince a sceptical or resistant person to purchase a product or use your skills?
- Think about a specific instance in which you were able to encourage others to take a chance with a new idea or project. What did you do?

- Describe a situation in which you were able to positively influence the actions of others in a desired direction. How did you approach it? What happened?

Initiative
Identifies opportunities and is pro-active in putting forward ideas and potential solutions.

- What was the best idea that you came up with in your studies? How did you apply it? What was the result?
- Think about the last time that you undertook a project that demanded a lot of initiative. How did you approach it? What was the outcome?
- Recall a time when you had to use your verbal communication skills in order to get a point across that was important to you. How did you plan for this? What was the result?

Interpersonal sensitivity
Recognises and respects different perspectives and appreciates the benefits of being open to the ideas and views of others.

- Consider a time when you built a successful relationship with a difficult person. What did you do? What was the outcome?
- Think about a time that you were able to accomplish a task because you had developed a good relationship with another person. How did this impact your work?

Leadership
Takes responsibility for the directions and actions of a team.

- When working on a team project have you ever had an experience where there was strong disagreement among team members? What did you do?
- How have you recognised and rewarded a team player in the past? What was the situation? What did you do?

Adapted from HE Academy resources online at
http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/ourwork/learning/employability/links last accessed 22.2.08

8.0   Supporting the process

8.1   The role of the Employer

In terms of reflection, the employer is a resource for the student to use. This may be in the form of, sharing ideas, listening, guiding and providing a sounding board in particular when reflecting on activities within the workplace. This is in effect more of a mentoring type role taking on a greater role if supporting a student work based project.

8.2   The role of the tutor

The role of the tutor is to assist you in the completion of the activities in this booklet and support your development of reflective writing. For example they may help you to consider your personal strengths and areas of development and provide feedback and help prompt you to consider the next stage in your development.

Remember that the responsibility for completing the activities within the logbook lies with you, your tutor is there to facilitate and guide the learning process when appropriate prompting you to consider your next course of action.

9.0   Summary

We hope the guide has helped in focussing your thoughts in a way that has assisted in bringing about improvements in the skills required for business today. It is a requirement of the programme that you maintain a learning journal which documents your thoughts and the highs and lows of your learning journey.

Consider carefully what you have learnt about yourself from completing activities in the guide, suggest 3 key areas for development and draw up an action plan with time limits to ensure that you carry this through.

Key Area	Action plan	Time scale	Who will help you

Good Luck with your studies

Feedback sheet

We hope that you have found the guide useful and we would value any feedback you might give on areas for improvement.   Please complete the questions below and return to the Business School Office FS2/01 or alternatively

What worked well?	Why
What could be improved?	How?
What else should be included?	Please detail

Please also complete your details below

Name (optional)…………………………………………………………………………………………….

Contact number (optional)   ………………………………………………………………………………….

Course……………………………………………………………………………………………………..

Year of study……………………………………………………………………………………………

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Taylor, B.J. (2000) Types of Reflection in Reflective Practice: A guide for nurses and midwives. Buckingham: Open University Press

Walsh

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Skills types

Key Skills	Often synonymous with the six National Key Skills developed through the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA): Communication Application of Number Information Technology Working with Others Improving own learning and performance Problem-solving
Transferable Skills	Those skills that developed within one situation but also useful when transferred into another – Education to employment or one job role to another
Generic Skills	Transferable skills that can be used across occupational groups Includes key skills above as well as: Reasoning skills Work process management skills Personal values and attitudes eg motivation, discipline, judgement, leadership and initiative
Common Skills	Universal nature of the skills – relevant to every person regardless of the discipline or career and are required in all occupations.
Core Skills	The skills have to be central to a person's experiences whether within education or employment
Basic Skills	Minimum requirement for operating in most occupations – literacy, numeracy and basic IT skills
Vocational/occupational specific skills	Specific 'technical' skills needed to work within an occupation of occupational group Could include function skills (Eg operating specific pieces of equipment) or employee-wide skills (eg specific working methodologies)
Cognitive skills	Primarily involve thinking, reasoning and use of knowledge
Manual Skills	Mainly rely on hand/eye co-ordination

Appendix 2 Honey and Mumford Learning Styles

Activists learn best when:

- involved in new experiences, problems and opportunities
- working with others in business games, team tasks, role-playing
- being thrown in the deep end with a difficult task
- chairing meetings, leading discussions

Activists learn less when:

- listening to lectures or long explanations
- reading, writing or thinking on their own
- absorbing and understanding data
- following precise instruction to the letter

How can active learners help themselves?

If you are an active learner in a class that allows little or no class time for discussion or problem-solving activities, you should try to compensate for these lacks when you study. Study in a group in which the members take turns explaining different topics to each other. Work with others to guess what you will be asked on the next test and figure out how you will answer. You will always retain information better if you find ways to do something with it

Reflectors learn best when:

- observing individuals or groups at work
- they have the opportunity to review what has happened and thing about what they have learned
- producing analyses and reports doing tasks without tight deadlines

Reflectors learn less when:

- acting as leader or role-playing in front of others
- doing things with no time to prepare
- being thrown in at the deep end
- being rushed or worried by deadlines

How can reflective learners help themselves?

If you are a reflective learner in a class that allows little or no class time for thinking about new information, you should try to compensate for this lack when you study. Don't simply read or memorize the material; stop periodically to review what you have read and to think of possible questions or applications. You might find it helpful to write short summaries of readings or class notes in your own words. Doing so may take extra time but will enable you to retain the material more effectively.

Everybody is active sometimes and reflective sometimes. Your preference for one category or the other may be strong, moderate, or mild. A balance of the two is desirable. If you always act before reflecting you can jump into things prematurely and get into trouble, while if you spend too much time reflecting you may never get anything done.

Theorists learn best when:

- they are put in complex situations where they have to use their skills and knowledge

- they are in structured situations with clear purpose
- they are offered interesting ideas or concepts even though they are not immediately relevant
- they have the chance to question and probe ideas behind things

Theorists learn less when:

- they have to participate in situations which emphasise emotion and feelings
- the activity is unstructured or briefing is poor
- they have to do things without knowing the principles or concepts involved
- they feel they're out of tune with the other participants e.g. with people of very different learning styles

How can theorist learners help themselves?

Most college courses are taught in a sequential and theoretical manner. However, if you are a theorist learner and you have an instructor who jumps around from topic to topic or skips steps, you may have difficulty following and remembering. Ask the instructor to fill in the skipped steps, or fill them in yourself by consulting references. When you are studying, take the time to outline the lecture material for yourself in logical order. In the long run doing so will save you time. You might also try to strengthen your global thinking skills by relating each new topic you study to things you already know. The more you can do so, the deeper your understanding of the topic is likely to be.

Pragmatists learn best when:

- there is an obvious link between the topic and job
- they have the chance to try out techniques with feedback e.g. role-playing
- they are shown techniques with obvious advantages e.g. saving time
- they are shown a model they can copy e.g. a film or a respected boss

Pragmatists learn less when:

- there is no obvious or immediate benefit that they can recognise
- there is no practice or guidelines on how to do it
- there is no apparent pay back to the learning e.g. shorter meetings
- the event or learning is 'all theory'

How can pragmatic learners help themselves?

If you are a pragmatic learner, try to find diagrams, sketches, schematics, photographs, flow charts, or any other visual representation of course material that is predominantly verbal. Ask your instructor, consult reference books, and see if any videotapes or CD-ROM displays of the course material are available. Prepare a concept map by listing key points, enclosing them in boxes or circles, and drawing lines with arrows between concepts to show connections. Colour-code your notes with a highlighter so that everything relating to one topic is the same colour.

Write summaries or outlines of course material in your own words. Working in groups can be particularly effective: you gain understanding of material by hearing classmates' explanations and you learn even more when you do the explaining.

Most of us has elements of more than one learning style. Think about your strongest style and your weakest style to identify how you learn.

Ref.: RM Felder and LK Silverman, 1988

Appendix 3 Examples of reflective practice

The Park (1)

I went through the part the other day. The sun shone sometimes but large clouds floated across the sky I a breeze. It reminded me of a time that I was walking on St David's Head in Wales – when there was a hard bright light and anything I looked at was bright. It was really quite hot - so much nicer than the day before, which was rainy. I went over to the children's playing field. I had not been there for a while and wanted to see the improvements. There were several children there and one, in particular, I noticed, was in too many clothes for the heat. The children were running about and this child became red in the face and began to slow down and then he sat. He must have been about 10. Some of the others called him up again and he got to his feet. He stumbled into the game for a few moments, tripping once or twice. It seemed to me that he had just not got the energy to lift his feet. Eventually he stumbled down and did not get up but he was still moving and he shuffled into a half-sitting and half-lying position watching the other children and I think he was calling out to them. I don't know.

Anyway, I had to get on to get to the shop to buy some meat for the chilli that my children had asked me to make for their party. The twins had invited many friends round for an end-of-term celebration of the beginning of the summer holidays. They might think that they have cause to celebrate but it makes a lot more work for me when they are home. I find that their holiday time makes a lot more work.

It was the next day when the paper came through the door – in it there was a report of a child who had been taken seriously ill in the park the previous day. He was fighting for his life in hospital and they said that the seriousness of the situation was due to the delay before he was taken to hospital. The report commented on the fact that he had been lying unattended for half an hour before someone saw him. By then the other children had gone. It said that several passers-by might have seen him looking ill and even on the ground and the report went on to ask why passers-by do not take action when they see that something is wrong. The article was headed 'Why do they "Walk on by"?' I have been terribly upset since then. James says I should not worry – it is just a headline.

The Park (2)

I went to the park the other day. I was going to the supermarket to get some meat to make the chilli that I had promised the children. They were having one of their end-of-term celebrations with friends. I wonder what drew me to the playground and why I ended up standing and watching those children playing with a rough old football? I am not sure as I don't usually look at other people's children – Io just did. Anyway there were a number of kids there. I noticed, in particular one child who seemed to be very over-dressed for the weather. I try now to recall what he looked like – his face was red. He was a boy of around 10 – not unlike Charlie was at that age – may be that is why I noticed him to start with when he was running around with the others. But then he was beginning to look distressed. I felt uneasy about him – sort of maternal but I did not do anything. What could I have done? I remember thinking, I had little time and the supermarket would get crowded. What a strange way of thinking, in the circumstance!
In retrospect, I wish I had acted. I ask myself what stopped me – but I don't know what I might have done at that point. Anyway he sat down, looking absolutely exhausted and as if he had no energy to do anything. A few moments later, the other children called him up to run about again. I felt more uneasy and watched as he got up and tried to run, then fell, ran again and fell and half-sat and half-lay. Still I did nothing more than look – what was going on with me?

Eventually I went on I tell myself now that it was really important to get to the shops. It was the next day when the paper came through the door that I had a real shock. In the paper there was a report of a child who had been taken seriously ill in the park the previous day. He was fighting for his life in the hospital and the situation was much more serious because there had been such a delay in getting help. The report commented on the fact that he had been lying unattended for half and hour or more. At first, I wondered why the other children had not been more responsible. The article went on to say that several passers-by might have seen him playing and looking ill and the report questioned why passers-by do not take action when they see that something is wrong. This incident has affected me for some days but I do not know where to go or whom to tell. I do want to own up to my part in it to someone though.

The Park (3)

The incident happened in Ingle Park and it is very much still on my mind. There was a child playing with others. He looked hot and unfit and kept sitting down but the other children kept on getting him back up and making him play with them. I was on my way to the shop and only watched the children for a while before I

walked on. Next day it was reported in the paper that the child had been taken to hospital seriously ill – very seriously ill. The report said that there were several passers-by in the park who had seen the child looking ill and who had done nothing. It was a scathing report about those who do not take action in such situations. Reading the report, I felt dreadful and it has been very difficult to shift the feelings. I did not stop to see to the child because I told myself that I was on my way to the shops to buy food for a meal that I had to cook for the children's party – what do I mean that I **had to** cook it? Though I saw that the child was ill, I didn't do anything. It is hard to say what I was really thinking at the time – to what degree I was determined to go on with my day in the way I had planned it (the party really was not all that important, was it?). Or did I genuinely not think that the boy was ill – but just over-dressed and a bit tired? To what extent did I try to make convenient excuses and to what extent was my action based on an attempt to really understand the situation? Looking back, I could have cut through my excuses at the time – rather than now.

I did not go over to the child and ask what was wrong but I should have done. I could have talked to the other children – even got one of the other children to call for help. I am not sure if the help would have been ambulance or doctor at that stage – but is does not matter now. If he had been given help then, he might not be fighting for his life now.

It would be helpful to me if I could work out what I was really thinking and why I acted as I did. This event has really shaken me to my roots – more than I would have expected. It made me feel really guilty. I do not usually do wrong, in fact, I think of myself as a good person. This event is also making me think about actions in all sorts of areas of my life. It reminds me of some things in the past, as when my uncle died – but then again I don't really think that that is relevant – he was going to die anyway. My bad feelings then were due to sheer sadness and some irrational regrets that I did not visit him on the day before. Strangely it also reminds me of how bad I felt when Charlie was ill while we went on that anniversary weekend away. As I think more about Charlie being ill, I recognise that there were commonalities in the situation. I also keep wondering it I knew that boy …

Comments on the quality of reflection in the above accounts

The Park (1)
This piece tells the story. Sometimes it mentions past experiences, sometimes anticipates the future but all in the context of the account of the story:
- There might be references to emotional state, but the role of the emotions on action is not explored.
- Ideas of others are mentioned but not elaborated or used to investigate the meaning of the events.
- The account is written only from one point of view – the story teller
- Generally ideas are presented in a sequence and are only linked by the story. They are not all relevant or focused.

Very descriptive account could hardly deem this as reflective at all. It could be a reasonably written account of an event that could serve as a basis on which reflection might start, though it hardly signals any material for reflection – other than the last few words.

The Park (2)
In this account there is a description of the same events. There is very little addition of ideas from outside the event – reference to attitudes of others or comments. The account is more than a story though. It is focused on the event as if there is a big question to be asked and answered.   In the questioning there is recognition of the worth of exploring the motives for behaviour but it does not go very far. In other words, asking the questions makes it more than a descriptive account, but the lack of attempt to respond to the questions means that there is little actual analysis of the events.
The writer is critical of her actions and, in her questions, signals this. The questioning of action does mean that the writer is standing back from the event to a small extent. There is a sense that she recognises that this is a significant incident, with learning to be gained but the reflection does not go sufficiently deep to enable the learning to begin to occur.

The Park (3)
The description is succinct, - just sufficient to raise the issues. Extraneous information is not added. It is not a story. The focus is on the attempt to reflect on the event and to learn from it. There is more of a sense of the writer standing back from the event in order to reflect better on her actions and in order to be more effectively critical. There is more analysis of the situation and an evident understanding that it was not a simple situation – that there might be alternative explanations or actions that could be justified equally effectively.

The description could be said to be slightly narrow as the writer is not acknowledging that there might be other ways of perceiving the situation – other points of view. She does not seem to recognise that her reflection is affected by her frame of reference at the time or now. It is possible, for example, that her experience with Charlie (last paragraph) – or her question about knowing the boy have influence the manner in which she reacted. It might not just be a matter of linking up other events, but of going beyond and checking out the possibility that her frame of reference might have been affected by the prior experiences.

Example Reflective learning account

The Hat Designers

What happened

This activity required me to work in a team with 4 other members of my seminar group. We were provided with instructions that we must design a hat with limited resources and provide an instruction sheet so that another group could follow this and make our hat design within 20 minutes and hopefully make a profit. At first there was some resistance within our group as they could not see the relevance of the task so I decided to take the lead and make some suggestions as to how we could work to the criteria.

Our group won the hat design challenge because our design was simple and our instructions were very clear and precise,

I have learnt that:

- I am quick to take the lead in a group situation without considering others.
- I will listen to all points of view and ensure others in the group are included however I will direct/ if I think the group are losing focus
- My team building profile suggests that I am a team worker which lends itself well to group tasks as I can promote team spirit.
- I am competitive and wanted our group to win, especially when told no other group had ever made a profit.

The reason our group won was:

- Our group grasped that the design of the hat wasn't necessarily the most important aspect of this task and that whether the other group could follow our instructions was far more important.
- We all took a role and different responsibility within the group to ensure that the brief was followed correctly.

To improve my performance next time I will:

- Not be distracted by a need to be liked. If the group requires a leader don't feel bad about adopting that role.
- Not try to take the lead immediately but rather offer to the group to see if anyone else would like the role.
- Better explain why I am doing or saying what I am. For example some members of the group became frustrated with my attention to detail. If I had explained better why I wanted to do this it may not have arisen.

Appendix 5 Further reading and sources of information

Honey, P. (1991) How People Learn in Gower Handbook of Training and Development. Gower
Kolb (1984) Experiential Learning. Experience As The Source of Learning and Development. London: Prentice Hall

Useful Websites

- ☐   http://www.rlo-cetl.ac.uk:8080/rlo/reflective_writing/reflective_writing.html

Other information sources:
- ☐   Learning styles test / multiple intelligences
  http://www.ldpride.net/learningstyles.MI.htm#Learning%20Styles%20Explained
  www.infed.org/thinkers/gardner.htm

- ☐   David Kolb's Learning Cycle
  http://www.infed.org/biblio/b-explrn.htm

- ☐   The Institute of Reflective Practice
  http://www.reflectivepractices.co.uk/

- ☐   http://www.onepine.info/people.htm

- ☐   http://www.infed.org.uk/encyclopaedia.htm

- ☐   Honey and Mumford - Learning Styles
  http://www.ruby3.dircon.co.uk/Training%20Files/Theory%20Pages/learning%20styles.htm

Journals

Reflective Practice – Taylor and Francis   http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals/titles/14623943.asp

Studies in the Education of Adults

Writers on reflective practice
Boud
Cinnamond & Zimpher (1990)
Eraut (1994)
Jarvis (1994)
Kolb (1984)
Mezirow (1991)
Schon (1983)
Tennant (1997)
Usher (1997)

Writers of Learning
Chris Argris
David Kolb (1984)
Kurt Lewin
Reg Revans
Pedlar
Jean Piaget