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Reflective practice: A Guide to Reflective Practice with Workbook: For post graduate and post experience learners

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# Reflective Practice

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A Guide to Reflective Practice with Workbook  
For post graduate and post experience learners



*University of*  
**HUDDERSFIELD**

The Business School  
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Supported by Higher Education Innovation Fund  
2007/8

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## 1.0 The Purpose of the Guide and Workbook

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The aim of this guide is to assist individuals to :

- Engage in the reflective process to encourage professional and personal development
- Help understand the importance of reflection and to practice using the tools and techniques to support reflective practice
- Allow the exploration of work experiences and to make sense of them in the context of academic theory and contemporary thinking
- blend the structured learning experience with the unstructured experiences in life and the 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.

It is important that learning is continuously applied and developed to meet the changing needs of the workplace. Reflection and the use of the tools of reflective practice can help support current studies and continued lifelong learning whether that be formal or informal.

The audience for this guide is post graduate and post experience learners at the University, it is intended specifically for managers and future managers at masters level to encourage reflection in the workplace rather than purely from an academic perspective. Additionally it is a resource for managers involved in supporting and developing staff members in the workplace.

This guide has been prepared as a working document to support 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 current and future career and employability.

**Section 1** provides the background and context to the process of reflection. Initially we explore the concept of how people learn which helps to contextualise the relevance of this to reflective practice. This is followed by guidance on the process of reflective practice illustrating through models guidance on keeping a reflective journal. The importance of reflective practice for managers is considered in the final section of the guide with suggestions on the support available to help you.

**Section 2** provides the templates and diagnostic tools to support professional development through reflective practice

### Contextual issues

#### The Guide

The guide has been developed through the use of *HEIC( check funding stream)* funding to examine how work based learning can be supported. Reflection is considered a critical tool to help work based learning. The project has supported a range of initiatives including the development of this guide to reflective practice specifically targeted at post graduate/post

experience learners and at undergraduate level a similar guide to support reflection in practice for learners undertaking a work placement.

### **The Standards**

At post graduate level learners are expected to evaluate their overall approach to work and their effectiveness in applying skills. (QCA 2001)

The QAA Benchmarks represent a comprehensive audit of the skills, and competencies required by a Masters level study which include: critical thinking and creativity; complex problem solving and decision making, the ability to conduct research ; the effective use of information and knowledge ; numeracy and quantitative skills including the development and use of business models; effective use of Communication and Information Technology; high personal effectiveness; effective performance within a team; leadership and performance management and the ability to recognise and address ethical dilemmas and corporate social responsibility issues. Details of the benchmark statements can be found on [www.qaa.ac.uk](http://www.qaa.ac.uk) and you may wish to refer to these when considering the skills, knowledge and experience requirements of a post graduate learner/ senior manager.

The above standards show the expectation of the government and ultimately employers of individuals within the workplace of the future. The next section outlines the usefulness of learning theories in helping us understand how individuals learn and the implications of this for individuals and employers.

## 2.0 Learning and Learning Styles

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This section is to help consider how you learn and the implications of the learning process for reflective practice.

Today's turbulent times present an ever- shifting array of problems, opportunities and performance expectations. Change is a way of life and the quest for high performance is constant, workers everywhere are expected to find ways to achieve high productivity, under new and dynamic situations.

This means that success depends on a real commitment to learning. And it's not just formal learning in the classroom that counts but lifelong learning- the process of continuously learning from our daily experiences and opportunities – so how do we learn? What processes do we go through to make the changes necessary to meet the needs of today's workplace?

### 2.1 Definitions of Learning

Learning is 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 is knowledge generated through work and all workplaces are potential sites of knowledge production" Boud (2003)

### 2.2 The Learning Process

"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)

#### How do we learn?

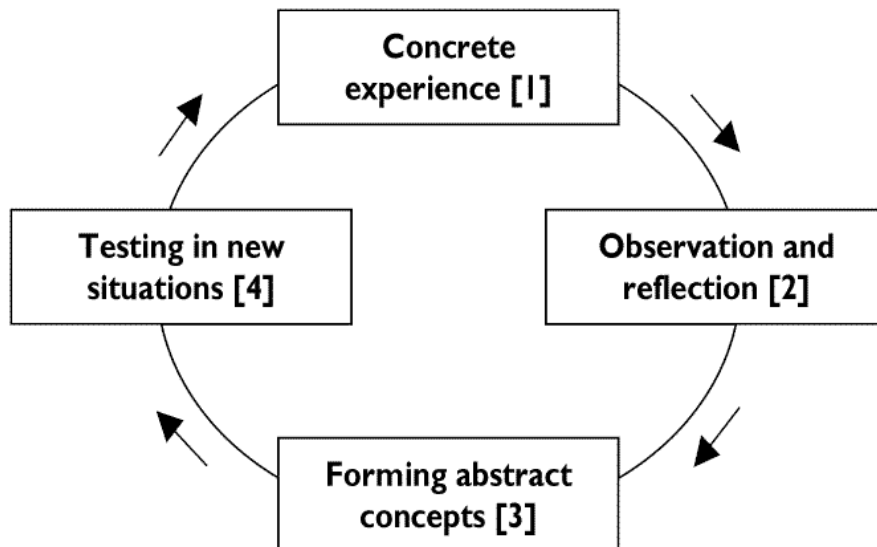
It is important to recognise how we learn before we embark upon the process of reflection. We all learn in different ways, some of us like to actively take part and learn from the experience whilst others like to read and prepare well before they learn. Kolb and Fry (1975) suggest that we go through a number of stages in the learning process whereas Honey and Mumford (1992) suggest that we have a preference for a particular learning style and if we are aware of this we can take action to improve based upon this learning style preference.

### 2.3 Learning Styles

#### Kolb and Fry

Kolb and Fry (1975) suggest that as we go through the stages in the learning process that we need to acknowledge the cyclical nature of learning. Kolb and Fry provide useful insight into the nature of learning. They demonstrate that there is no end to learning but only another turn of the cycle; that learners are not passive recipients and need to actively explore and test the environment, the cycle specifically identifies the importance of reflection and internalisation and it is a useful way of identifying problems in the learning process ie do we go through all of the stages in the cycle before we take action? Do we sometimes miss out on the key stage of reflection in the learning cycle?

This approach emphasises the importance of synthesis between an individual's behaviour and the evaluation of their actions. Reflection of what has been learned in order to experiment with new situations and to become aware of new possibilities is a vital part of the learning process. Kolb further suggests that experiential learning will enable managers to cope with change and complexity



Kolb & Fry (1975)

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

## Learning styles

### Honey and Mumford

Honey and Mumford (1995) 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.

The styles below show the different learning styles which are Activist, Reflector, Theorist and Pragmatist. In the workbook you are asked to consider your most preferred learning style based upon Honey and Mumford



**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.

A detailed explanation of the learning styles can be found in appendix 1.

The two approaches acknowledge the relevance of learning styles and the learning process. You are asked in the workbook to consider which style from the work of Honey and Mumford best matches your approach to learning. There are activities that you can complete in order to determine your own preferred learning style. These can be accessed through the Academic Skills Unit website of the University of Huddersfield Business School [www.hud.ac.uk/academicskillsunit](http://www.hud.ac.uk/academicskillsunit)

This section should help you consider your preferred learning style and the implications of this for learning and reflection. The next section provides some definitions of what is reflective practice.

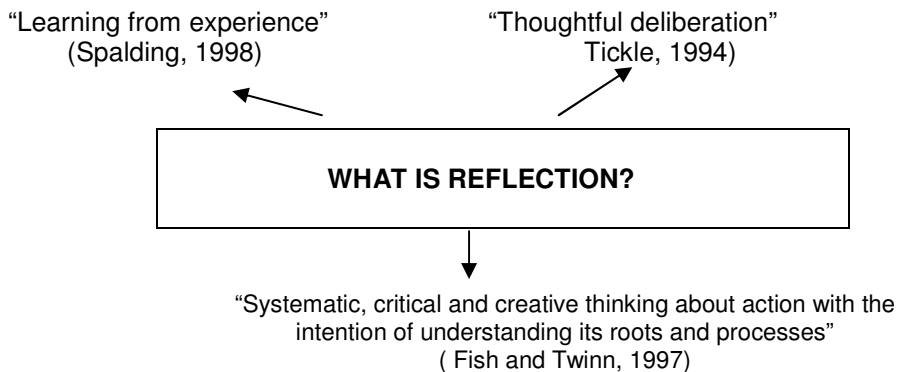


## 3.0 Reflective practice

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Reflective practice is an evaluative tool used 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. This section aims to explain what reflective practice is and is not

### 3.1 What is Reflection?



According to Boyd and Fales (1983) 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.

Critical reflection is defined by the QCA (2001) as taken to mean a deliberate process when the candidate takes time, within the course of their work, to focus on their performance and think carefully about the thinking that led to particular actions, what happened and what they are learning from the experience, in order to inform what they might do in the future.

Moon (2004) provides us with some helpful definitions in the process of reflective practice. The concept of reflection in education is represented in a number of different words – reflection, reflective learning, reflective writing and reflective practice. Reflection is part of learning and thinking. We reflect in order to learn something or we learn as a result of reflecting, and the term reflective learning emphasis the intention to learn from current or prior experience. The aim of reflective writing is to set down steps that we worked through when we were trying to give a coherent shape to our reflections. Reflective practice is a relatively new phrase developed as a result of the work of Donald Schon (1983;1987) Schon emphasises the role of reflection in professional or complex activities, particularly where situations are unpredictable. Some of the terms tend to be used interchangeably however the definition by Schon supports the view that reflective practice is an important tool for managers to use in order to meet the turbulent environment we work in.

As a result of reflection then a variety of outcomes can be expected King (2007) suggests these may be development of a theory, the formulation of a plan of action or a decision or resolution of some uncertainty. Furthermore emotions may be experienced that leads to self development, empowerment and knowledge. Within the work environment this process then becomes of critical importance.

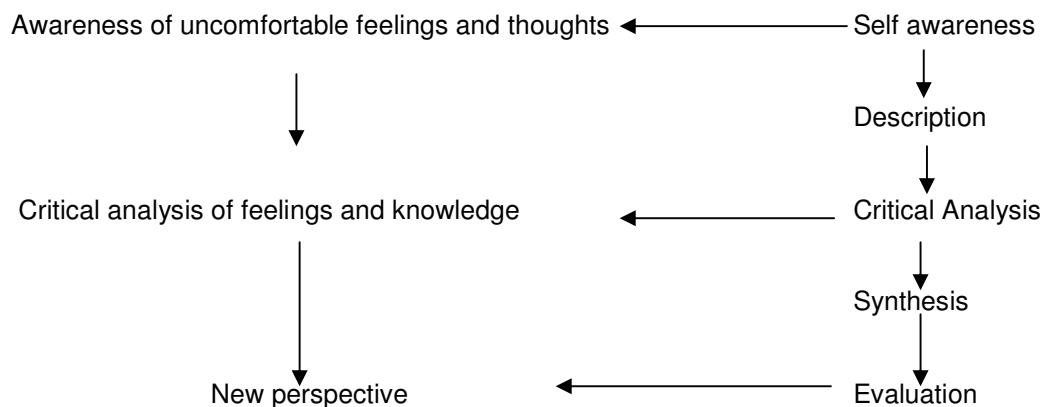
Moon (1999) provides us with a list of the following outcomes of reflective practice:

- Learning and material for further reflection
- Action
- Critical review
- Personal and continuing professional development

- Reflection on the process of learning or personal functioning ( metacognition)
- The building of theory
- Decisions or resolutions of uncertainty
- Problem solving
- Empowerment and emancipation
- Unexpected outcomes such as images and ideas that may be the solution to problems
- Emotional development in some form

Both writers support the view that reflection can bring about change, growth and development through this process which is critical in today's workplace. A further point to note is the process we work through to bring about these outcomes. Chimera (2007) suggests that we go through a number of stages to bring about a change in our perspective. Her model is illustrated below

### **Reflective Processes – a model including skills required for reflection**



Source: Atkins (1993)

This model shows that in undertaking reflective practice that we need to develop the higher level skills of analysis, synthesis and evaluation in order to support us in achieving the new perspective. This links to the work of Bloom (1964) and the taxonomies of learning. This would seem to suggest that individuals have to work at perfecting the skill of reflection through this the practice of higher order skills.

### **3.2 What reflective writing is not.**

It is sometimes helpful when trying to understand a concept to be clear about what the process is not. Here Moon (2004) provides us with what 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.

This may start to help define the parameters of the idea of reflective practice. Chmera provides a module of the skills required of reflection and how these may lead to different levels of reflection

Whichever definition you chose, or whatever your reason to reflect, the research suggests that through the process of reflective practice new perspectives can be gained if the higher level skills of critical analysis, synthesis and evaluation are practiced and employed.

## 4.0 Starting your Reflective Journey

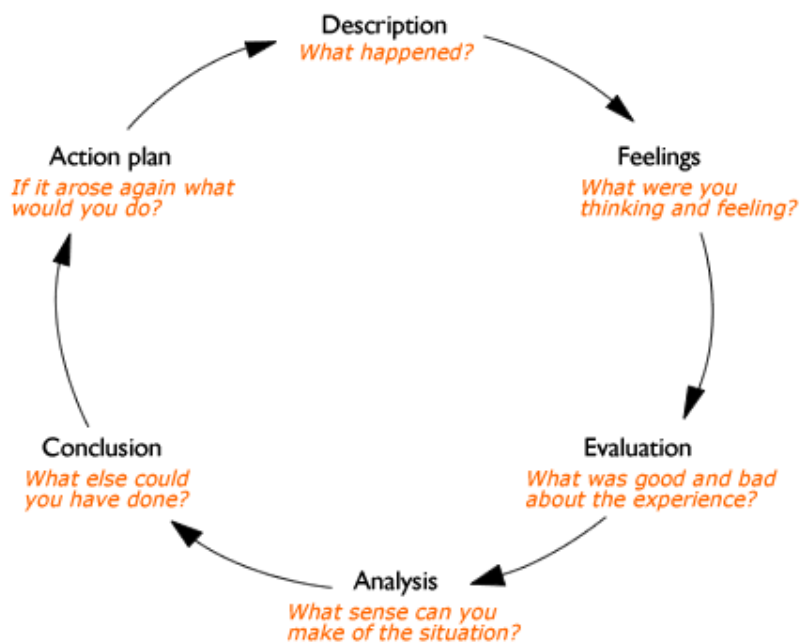
This section provides two models in the support of developing the skills of reflective writing and tips on how to do this. The first model provided by Gibbs is cyclical in nature, the second model provided by Rolfe is known as the model of reflexive practice. Templates for you to complete using either of the models can be found in Section 6 of the Workbook

### 4.1 Models of reflection

Two models of Reflective Practice are detailed below which you may find useful in your work, these are provided by Gibbs (1988) and Rolfe (2001). An example of an account is provided in appendix 3 Gibbs suggests it is helpful to think of reflection in a cyclical manner whilst Rolfe provides us with a toolkit of reflexive practice.

#### 4.1.1 Gibb's Reflective Cycle

### GIBBS REFLECTIVE CYCLE



(Gibbs 1988)

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

#### **Stage 1: Description of the event**

Describe in detail the event you are reflecting on. Include e.g. where were you; who else was there; why were you there; what were you doing; what were other people doing; what was the context of the event; what happened; what was your part in this; what parts did the other people play; what was the result.

#### **Stage 2: Feelings**

At this stage try to recall and explore the things that were going on inside your head i.e. why does this event stick in your mind. Include e.g. how you were feeling when the event started; what you were thinking about at the time; how did it make you feel; how did other people make you feel; how did you feel about the outcome of the event; what do you think about it now.

### Stage 3: Evaluation

Try to evaluate or make a judgement about what has happened. Consider what was good about the experience and what was bad about the experience or didn't go so well

### Stage 4: Analysis

Break the event down into its component parts so they can be explored separately. You may need to ask more detailed questions about the answers to the last stage. Include e.g. what went well; what did you do well; what did 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

### Stage 5: Conclusion

This differs from the evaluation stage in that now you have explored the issue from different angles and have a lot of information to base your judgement. 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. Remember the purpose of reflection is to learn from an experience. Without detailed analysis and honest exploration that occurs during all the previous stages, it is unlikely that all aspects of the event will be taken into account and therefore valuable opportunities for learning can be missed. During this stage you should ask yourself what you could have done differently.

### Stage 6: Action Plan

During this stage you should think yourself forward into encountering the event again and to plan what you would do – would you act differently or would you be likely to do the same?

Here the cycle is tentatively completed and suggests that should the event occur again it will be the focus of another reflective cycle

## 4.2.1 Rolfe (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 level of reflection (reflexive)
<b>What ...</b>	<b>So what</b>	<b>Now what ...</b>
... 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	· personal	
· for myself? for others?	· scientific	
... feelings did it evoke	...could/should I have done to make it better?	
· in myself? in others?		
... was good/bad about the experience?	... is my new understanding of the	

situation?

... broader issues arise from the situation?

### 4.3 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 taken from Gibbs (1988) and Walker (1985) when maintaining your journal:

Two models are provided below which are followed through in the workbook for you to try out and see whether they work for you

### 4.4 Tips for Writing Your Reflective Journal

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <b><i>Make the journal your own</i></b>          | ensure the journal is 'an extension of yourself, not something outside of you' Walker (1985)   |
| <b><i>Be honest</i></b>                          | 'you can only learn from your journal if you have enough courage to face yourself as you really are' Gibbs (1988)  |
| <b><i>Let words flow</i></b>                     | '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)                      |
| <b><i>Use your own words</i></b>                 | '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) |
| <b><i>Dig deeper</i></b>                         | 'urge yourself to keep digging deeper and deeper so that you can understand and use your understanding' Gibbs (1988)   |
| <b><i>Be flexible</i></b>                        | '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)  |
| <b><i>Write things up as soon as you can</i></b> | 'there is a very definite advantage in being able to record things as quickly as possible, even though one may not immediately write them up fully' Walker (1985)  |
| <b><i>Seek help if necessary</i></b>             | 'feel free to seek help .... From others: fellow participants, or other people ...' Walker (1985)  |

#### 4.5 Developing Deeper Reflection

As you practice the skill of reflective writing you may find it helpful to consider the work of Hatton and Smith (1995) who suggest that there are 4 levels of reflective activity. These are as outlined below:

- 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. Appendix 2 provides you with an example of the different levels of reflective activity.

The models described above should help get you started with your reflective journal, two templates based on the above models are provided in the workbook, there are however others available and you need to choose the model/ template that works best for you. The next section reinforces the relevance of reflection as a tool for managers and prompts you to consider the support that might be available to help you through the process

## 5.0 The Importance of Reflection for Managers and the Support Available

In the ever changing world of work managers need to continue to learn from new experiences and develop new skills or transfer existing skills to new situations. The practice of reflection can assist managers in continuing professional and personal development. This section considers why the skills of reflection are important for managers and suggests support that may be available to help you along the journey.

### 5.1 Why is reflective practice important

It is suggested by various writers (King 2007, Moon1999) on reflective practice that the use of reflective learning can support development in the form of a plan of action or decision or resolution of some uncertainty. Such outcomes may be as a result of a problem solving activity. From this one may experience emotions leading to self development, empowerment and knowledge about their own feelings and emotions. This then may lead to further reflection resulting in learning about how you learn as an individual and actions you need to take in order to progress the learning further. It may even support the development of new ideas, theories, systems of work and frameworks to assist you and others in the workplace. Developments like these have real importance for managers and the workplace.

As we have discussed the key stages of the reflective process involve

- An awareness of uncomfortable feelings and thoughts;
- Critical analysis, including attending to feelings;
- Development of a new perspective on the situation

It is therefore, within the workplace, that reflection may be stimulated by our response to a specific situation, 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. 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

There is often a need to reflect upon your management practices and use the processes identified in the previous sections to identify strengths, weaknesses and actions to be taken from your experience within the work context. Through reflective practice you should be able to use the higher level management skills to deal with issues and problems at work converting these into learning experiences.

In working through the reflective practice guide you may find it helpful to consider who may assist, guide or support you in the workplace. You may have a supportive manager who will listen to you in trying to work through a particular problem or you may have a mentor already allocated to you that could provide a sounding board for your reflections.

## **5.2 Supporting the process**

### **5.2.1 Senior staff/ line manager**

In terms of reflection, senior staff/line management within the organisation may be a resource to be used. 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 would make you a recipient of a coaching type role with senior management taking on a greater role if involved in setting or commissioning project/ assignment work.

### **5.2.2 The mentor**

Mentoring within organisations is usually in the form of an experienced member of staff giving help to the person being mentored to find new meanings in work. 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. The mentor would not normally be your line manager.

Regardless of whether you are supported by your line manager or mentor or both it is suggested that the pre requisites for effective supervision in reflective practice include honesty and openness. From the participants perspective Gillings (2000) suggests that a commitment to self enquiry and a readiness to change practice are important if the individual is to get the most out of the process.

### **5.2.3 The Tutor**

The tutor is also part of the support mechanism to help you develop the tools of reflection and reflective writing. The tutor will make time through tutorial sessions to support, guide and encourage you in the process

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

Reflective practice is a useful tool for managers in the workplace and for post graduate learners to prepare for the workplace. There are people who can and will support you but the onus is upon you as a self directed learner to make the most of these opportunities

## **5.3 The next step**

Now we have outlined the aim of the guide, the learning process, what is reflection and models to support the process of reflection the next stage is for you to complete the workbook which should support your learning- personal and professional development- through reflective practice.



# Reflective Practice

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Part Two- The Workbook

For post graduate and post experience learners

## 1.0 How to use the workbook

‘A famous cartoonist once attended a cocktail party with some friends. Someone asked him to draw a caricature of everyone present, which he proceeded to do. When the sketches were passed around for the guests to identify, everyone recognised the other persons, but hardly anyone recognised the caricature of himself’

Many of us are like the people at that cocktail party. We really don't know ourselves. Taken from Robbins (1998)

We need to know ourselves before we can start to plan for our own personal and professional development. This workbook is for you to complete on a regular basis to support your own personal and professional development in the process of reflective learning and development. In Part Two of the Guide the Workbook provides a range of templates to help you develop your skills of reflective practice in order to continually develop skills needed of Managers in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. We suggest that you work through the booklet in the following order

In Section 1 you need to carefully consider the skills required of you in your role and assess your level of skills in these areas, carefully reflecting on evidence to support this diagnosis.

In Section 2 having completed the personal skills assessment complete a personal SWOT analysis and ask others to give you an opinion on how they perceive your skills, knowledge and experience relevant to your work role. You may ask that your manager, co workers and staff you have responsibility for contribute to this. If they wish you could ask that they complete the SWOT analysis anonymously.

There are other activities you can undertake to find out more about yourself. Textbooks and websites can provide templates for activities such as the Myers Briggs Types Indicator, J.B. Rotter's External Control and Internal Control questionnaire, questionnaires on Self awareness; Self Esteem; your ability to Self monitor, Emotional Intelligence etc. *Link to academic skills unit to complete some of these activities*

Part 3 requires you to consider your learning style and a template is provided for you to consider your preferred learning style, least preferred learning style and what the implications are for you in the workplace of this knowledge. Appendix 1 provides a detailed outline of each learning style according to the work of Honey and Mumford. You can complete the questionnaire on learning styles if you wish via the Huddersfield University Academic Skills Unit website [www.hud.ac.uk/academic](http://www.hud.ac.uk/academic) skills

Part 4 requires you to take the results from the skills assessment, feedback from peers, managers, family etc, the SWOT analysis and acknowledgement of your preferred learning styles to draw up what your personal actions for development might be. A template for this is provided.

Part 5 Encourages you to start your learning journey using reflective practice to support you complete the action plan. Two templates are provided to get you started, dependant upon which template best supports you in reflective practice more copies of the template can be downloaded or copied for you to complete on a regular basis. We would suggest that you may complete these initially on a weekly basis, moving to fortnightly and monthly as your skills of reflective writing develop.

In the final part of the working document we ask that, at a suitable time, possibly after six months or if studying at the University it may be useful to review at the end of the first semester and at the end of the programme, that you complete a review of your progress. A template to support the review is provided.

Once you have completed the above activities you should then be engaged on a continuous learning journey using the skills of reflective practice to maintain and update your personal and professional development. You may consider further reading into the benefits of keeping a professional learning journal for your individual career planning and a list of useful references is provided to support more research into reflective practice. We hope you find the workbook useful.

## Section 2 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 skills below, 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/or university experience.

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

<p><b>PROBLEM SOLVING</b></p> <p>Identify the key features of the problem</p> <p>Think laterally about the problem</p> <p>Identify options and suggest possible solutions</p> <p>Plan and implement a course of action</p> <p>Monitor evaluate and adapt solutions and outcomes</p> <p>Ability to apply ideas and knowledge to a range of situations</p> <p>Take responsibility for individual and group decision making</p>					
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	1	2	3	4	Justification
<p><b>COMMUNICATION</b></p> <p>Present oral/visual information competently</p> <p>Listen actively and effectively</p> <p>Ability to take part in a discussion, to put your own viewpoint across and to listen and respond to others</p> <p>Offer constructive criticism</p> <p>Speak fluently and confidently to a variety of audiences</p> <p>Produce a variety of written documents</p> <p>Use written documents to support your verbal communication</p> <p>Evaluate and adapt strategies for communication</p>					
<p><b>WORKING WITH OTHERS</b></p> <p>Plan work with others, agreeing objectives and responsibilities</p> <p>Respect the views and values of others</p> <p>Adapt to the needs of the group/ team (take initiative, lead, delegate, stand back, negotiate etc)</p> <p>Assist and support others in learning</p> <p>Negotiate with individuals/groups</p> <p>Work to collective goals</p> <p>Monitor, evaluate and assess processes of group/ team work</p>					
<p><b>DATA HANDLING</b></p> <p>Use appropriate sources of information (library, retrieval systems, IT, people etc )</p> <p>Use appropriate technology and media including IT</p> <p>Handle volumes of information and data effectively</p> <p>Record and interpret results / data</p> <p>Interpret a variety of information forms</p> <p>Use appropriate numerical information</p> <p>Evaluate and adopt strategies for handling data and information</p>					

1. Limited experience of this 2. Able to do this with some help	3. Competent in this area 4. This is a strength area				
	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>Justification</b>
<p><b>Other skills</b></p> <p><b>Supervision and Management</b></p> <p><b>Leadership</b></p> <p><b>Strategic Planning</b></p> <p><b>Delegating</b></p> <p><b>Coaching, Guiding and Supporting Others</b></p> <p><b>See Burgoyne</b></p>					

### Section 3 Where am I now?

#### 3.1 Knowing your strengths and recognising areas for development

The purpose of the previous activity was to enable you to consider those skills and personal qualities which you have developed through your experiences at 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

A further template is provided for you to ask others to evaluate your strengths and areas for improvement. You may choose to ask a number of different people in different roles to give you a balanced picture for example your manager, staff that report to you, peers and co workers, family members or friends. We can often be over critical about our opportunities for development and fail to either recognise or acknowledge areas that others see as strengths. You could ask others to complete this confidentially however it may be useful to be able to go back to the people who have completed this for you for more detailed clarification or discussion.

##### 3.1.1 Personal SWOT

Personal Strengths	Evidenced by
Areas less developed	Opportunities for development

Make use of feedback from assignment, group activities and appraisal feedback to evidence, evaluate and support your statements

### 3.2 What do others think of your strengths and areas for development?

Either in your course groups, social groupings or work teams ask for support/feedback from your peers/ colleagues/ manager/ friends/ family in evaluating your skills, personal and professional qualities and **areas for development using the same template as above**

#### 3.2.1 Peer assessment / manager assessment

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 may 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.



**Section 4 What is your preferred learning style?**

In the guide we outlined the works of Kolb and Fry and Honey and Mumford in relation to learning styles. Now you have completed the exercises to consider your skills and areas for development it is useful to consider your personal learning style preference, 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 which is detailed in appendix 1 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		

**Section 5      Developing the action plan**

You need to use the work from the three previous activities to determine your key areas for development. You may find it useful to work in your class groups/ work teams to support each other in clarifying what the actions should be. Note if you complete this as a group activity it may be beneficial to display your key areas for development around the classroom/ training room and ask group members to comment or ask questions in relation to the following table- Appendix 5 contains details of how this can be used as a group activity

Revens (1983) suggest you may wish to ask yourself the following questions. These may help you clarify and focus on the key actions to be taken

- What am I trying to do?
- What is stopping me?
- What can I do about it?
- Who knows what I am trying to do?
- Who cares about what I am trying to do?
- Who else can do anything to help?

Complete the table below to determine what the key areas for development will be over the next few months/ semester, what actions will you take to facilitate the areas for development, clearly identifying who will help you in this. Consider carefully anything that may constrain or seek to prevent you from achieving this goal and how you will work around this and finally provide yourself a timescale or some interim measures and timescales by which you will have addressed this action.

<b>Key Area for Development</b>	<b>Actions – what will I do?</b>	<b>Who will help you?</b>	<b>What are the constraints/ barriers to achieving this key are and how you will manage these– eg time, resources,</b>	<b>Time scale – by when</b>

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Completion of the action plan may take some time as you need to carefully think through your key areas for development, you may find yourself returning to the plan throughout the duration of the reflective journal. You may add or develop some of the key areas identified or even remove some actions that you think are no longer relevant or viable to what you are working towards. As you embark upon the journey situations may develop that take you in a different direction and this can and should be incorporated into the plan. You are now ready to start your reflective journal.

## Section 6 Developing reflective practice through the learning journal

Now you have completed your action plan you need to develop the skills of reflective practice in order to do this you are advised to start by maintaining a learning journal..

When completing your learning journal focus on the central areas of your life like – personal, academic and professional, for example

- Comments and evaluations of modules- usefulness, enjoyment
- Reactions to personal reading and study habits
- Objectives and how they have been addressed and achieved
- Significant events eg decisions, views
- Expectations, attitudes, values and beliefs

Appendix 6 provides an introductory activity on the process of reflective learning which can be used in a group/ class situation – it is usually best used as a group learning tool for Tutors/ Managers/ Facilitators

Now work individually to complete either of the templates below to find out what best helps you on your learning journey. In the Guide you were provided with examples of how each of these models should be used and you may wish to refer to pages 10-13 to refresh yourselves on working practice

### Model 1 Gibbs' Reflective Cycle

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

Event Description	
Feelings	
Evaluation	
Analysis	

Conclusion	
Action Plan	

**OR**

**Model 2 Rolfe's So What? Model**

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

You may at this stage wish to consider how well you are reflecting? If you are completing this as part of a group learning activity you can help each other to develop your reflective learning practice by carrying out the activity below.

Print off your learning log entries and anonymously place these around the training room or classroom with flipchart paper below the learning log entry for all participants to make comments and ask questions. This should provide you with constructive feedback on how well the process is working and facilitate discussion as to what has been learned that can be taken forward.

If you are not working as part of a group then it is still helpful to consider what you have learnt from completing a reflective account and how this will help you to achieve the key areas you identified in the action planning stage. If you have tried using both models – Gibbs and Rolf – then you should now be able to determine what works best for you. Please complete the template below to help you further in your reflective journey.

What have I learnt from these completing a reflective account      What works for me and why

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

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### How often should I complete the learning log?

You should now have a clear idea on which model works best for you and the method you will use to continue your reflective journey. We recommend that initially you complete at least weekly entries using either the Rolf or Gibbs model or one that you have adapted from these models that work for you. Additional templates can be found in the appendix to the guide for copying or downloading.

You may then find that as you develop a more reflective style that you wish to increase or reduce this depending upon the activities that you are involved in such as work based projects or assignments. We also suggest that you carry out a quarterly review and link these back to your action plan in order to ensure that you demonstrate you are working towards your action plan and meeting the targets you set for yourself. At the end of the time scale for completing your action plan you should complete a summative review.

### Quarterly/Interim/ Summative Review Sheet

Key Area for Development	What was the outcome?	How has this helped you?	What held you back and what did you do about it?	What do you still need to do?	Unintended outcomes that you wish to record
<i>Please insert your areas for development from your original action plan</i>					

## 7.0 Final Thoughts

We hope that this guide and working log has been helpful in focusing your thoughts in a way that has assisted you in bringing about improvements in the skills required for business today. This process of reflective writing may be something that you have used to support or evidence learning from a particular course or module. Alternatively it may be a piece of work you have undertaken to support your personal development plan or continuing professional development. However please remember one of the features mentioned by Kolb and Fry (1975) that there is no end to learning but only another turn of the cycle. You may have therefore reached the end of the first cycle but you may need to consider how you continue to grow and develop in your learning, studies and workplace. The workbook templates are available on line and can be used on a regular ongoing basis. We trust the guide has helped support you in a journey of reflection bringing about learning, development and personal growth. Further reading on the topic of keeping a reflective journal can be found in the appendices.

‘ Students need to be able fluently to review their processes of learning and their achievements in higher education that are relevant to a job and to use reflection to support further learning from experience on the job’ Moon (2007)

We wish you good luck in your journey.



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## **Appendices**

- Appendix 1 Honey and Mumford learning styles
- Appendix 2 Examples of reflective practice
- Appendix 3 Examples of a reflective account
- Appendix 4 Further reading and sources of information
- Appendix 5 Group activity to support the development of realistic actions
- Appendix 6 Group activity to support the development of reflective writing
- Appendix 7 Templates for recording reflective accounts

## Appendix 1 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 think 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 2 Examples of reflective practice - taken from Moon (2004)**

### The Park (1)

I went through the park the other day. The sun shone sometimes but large clouds floated across the sky with 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 – I 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 an 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 it 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 if 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 influenced 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 2 taken from Moon (2004)

### ***The Presentation***

**A)** I had to take an agenda item to the weekly team meeting in my third week of working at PIGG PLC. I had to talk about the project that I am on (creating a new database for the management information system). I had done a presentation before and then I relied on my acting skills. Despite the acting, I spent quite a bit of time preparing it in the way that I have seen others make similar presentations.

The presentation at the last team meeting, given by my colleague, went well – she used Power Point and I decided to use it. I decided that a good presentation comes from good planning and having all the figures that anyone might request so I spent a long time in the preparation and I went in feeling confident.

However, I became nervous when I realised they were all waiting for me to speak and my nerves made my voice wobble. I did not know how to stop it. Early on, I noticed that people seemed not to understand what I was saying despite the Power Point. Using Power Point meant that people received my presentation both through what I was saying and what I had prepared on the slides. In a way that meant they got it twice but I noticed that Mrs Shaw (my boss) repeated bits of what I had said several times and once or twice answered questions for me. This made me feel uncomfortable. I felt it was quite patronising and I was upset. Later my colleagues said that she always does it. I was disappointed that my presentation did not seem to have gone well.

I thought about the presentation for several days and then talked with Mrs Shaw about the presentation (there was no-one else). She gave me a list of points for improvement next time. They included:

- putting less on Power Point;
- talking more slowly;
- calming myself down in some way.

I also have to write down the figures in a different way so that they can be understood better. She suggested that I should do a presentation to several of the team sometime next week so that I can improve my performance.

**B)** I had to take an agenda item to the weekly team meeting in my third week of working at PIGG PLC. I had to talk about the project that I am on. I am creating a new database for the management information system. I had given a presentation before and that time I relied on my acting skills. I did realise that there were considerable differences between then and now, particularly in the situation (it was only fellow students and my tutor before). I was confident but I did spend quite a bit of time preparing. Because everyone else here uses Power Point, I felt I had better use it – though I realised that it was not for the best reasons. I also prepared lots of figures so that I could answer questions. I thought, at that stage, that any questions would involve requests for data. When I think back on the preparation that I did, I realise that I was desperately trying to prove that I could make a presentation as well as my colleague, who did the last one. I wanted to impress everyone. I had not realised there was so much to learn about presenting, and how much I needed to know about Power Point to use it properly.

When I set up the presentation in the meeting I tried to be calm but it did not work out. Early on the Power Point went wrong and I began to panic. Trying to pretend that I was cool and confident made the situation worse because I did not admit my difficulties and ask for help. The more I spoke, the more my voice went wobbly. I realised, from the kinds of questions that the others asked, that they did not understand what I was saying. They were asking for clarification – not the figures. I felt worse when Mrs Shaw, my boss, started to answer questions for me. I felt flustered and even less able to cope.

As a result of this poor presentation, my self esteem is low at work now. I had thought I was doing all right in the company. After a few days, I went to see Mrs Shaw and we talked it over. I still feel that



her interventions did not help me. Interestingly several of my colleagues commented that she always does that. It was probably her behaviour, more than anything else, that damaged my poise. Partly through talking over the presentation and the things that went wrong (but not, of course, her interventions), I can see several areas that I could get better. I need to know more about using Power Point – and to practice with it. I recognise, also, that my old acting skills might have given me initial confidence, but I needed more than a clear voice, especially when I lost my way with Power Point. Relying on a mass of figures was not right either. It was not figures they wanted. In retrospect, I could have put the figures on a handout. I am hoping to have a chance to try with a presentation, practicing with some of the team.

**C)** I am writing this back in my office. It all happened 2 days ago.

Three weeks after I started at PIGG PLC had to take an agenda item to the team meeting. I was required to report on my progress in the project on which I am working. I am developing a new database for the management information system of the company. I was immediately worried. I was scared about not saying the right things and not being able to answer questions properly. I did a presentation in my course at university and felt the same about it initially. I was thinking then, like this time, I could use my acting skills. Both times that was helpful in maintaining my confidence at first, at least. Though the fact that I was all right last time through the whole presentation may not have helped me this time!

I decided to use Power Point. I was not very easy about its use because I have seen it go wrong so often. However, I have not seen anyone else give a presentation here without using it - and learning to use Power Point would be valuable. I was not sure, when it came to the session, whether I really knew enough about running Power Point. (How do you know when you know enough about something? – dummy runs, I suppose, but I couldn't get the laptop when I wanted it).

When it came to the presentation, I really wanted to do it well – as well as the presentations were done the week before. Maybe I wanted too much to do well. Previous presentations have been interesting, informative and clear and I thought the handouts from them were good (I noticed that the best gave enough but not too much information).

In the event, the session was a disaster and has left me feeling uncomfortable in my work and I even worry about it at home. I need to think about why a simple presentation could have such an effect on me. The Power Point went wrong (I think I clicked on the wrong thing). My efforts to be calm and 'cool' failed and my voice went wobbly – that was, anyway, how it felt to me. My colleague actually said afterwards that I looked quite calm despite what I was feeling (I am not sure whether she meant it or was trying to help me). When I think back to that moment, if I had thought that I still looked calm (despite what I felt), I could have regained the situation. As it was, it went from bad to worse and I know that my state became obvious because Mrs Shaw, my boss, began to answer the questions that people were asking for me.

I am thinking about the awful presentation again – it was this time last week. I am reading what I wrote earlier about it. Now I return to it, I do have a slightly different perspective. I think that it was not as bad as it felt at the time. Several of my colleagues told me afterwards that Mrs Shaw always steps in to answer questions like that and they commented that I handled her intrusion well. That is interesting. I need to do some thinking about how to act next time to prevent this interruption from happening or to deal with the situation when she starts\*. I might look in the library for that book on assertiveness.

I have talked to Mrs Shaw now too. I notice that my confidence in her is not all that great while I am still feeling a bit cross. However, I am feeling more positive generally and I can begin to analyse what I could do better in the presentation. It is interesting to see the change in my attitude after a week. I need to think from the beginning about the process of giving a good presentation.. I am not sure how helpful was my reliance on my acting skills\*. Acting helped my voice to be stronger and better paced, but I was not just trying to put over someone else's lines but my own and I needed to be able to discuss matters in greater depth rather than just give the line\*.

I probably will use Power Point again. I have had a look in the manual and it suggests that you treat it as a tool – not let it dominate and not use it as a means of presenting myself. That is what I think I was doing. I need not only to know how to use it, but I need to feel sufficiently confident in its use so I

can retrieve the situation when things go wrong. That means understanding more than just the sequence of actions\*.

As I am writing this, I am noticing how useful it is to go back over things I have written about before. I seem to be able to see the situation differently. The first time I wrote this, I felt that the presentation was dreadful and that I could not have done it differently. Then later I realised that there were things I did not know at the time (eg about Mrs Shaw and her habit of interrupting). I also recognise some of the areas in which I went wrong. At the time I could not see that. It was as if my low self esteem got in the way. Knowing where I went wrong, and admitting the errors to myself gives me a chance to improve next time – and perhaps to help Mrs Shaw to improve in her behaviour towards us!

\*I have asterisked the points that I need to address in order to improve.

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## **Features of the accounts that are indicative of different levels of reflection**

### **A) This account is descriptive and it contains little reflection.**

1. The account describes what happened, sometimes mentioning past experiences, sometimes anticipating the future – but all in the context of an account of the event.
2. There are some references to Marianne's emotional reactions, but she has not explored how the reactions relate to her behaviour.
3. Ideas are taken on without questioning them or considering them in depth.
4. The account is written only from Marianne's point of view.
5. External information is mentioned but its impact on behaviour is not subject to consideration.
6. Generally one point is made at a time and ideas are not linked.

### **B) An account showing evidence of some reflection.**

1. There is description of the event, but where there are external ideas or information, the material is subjected to consideration and deliberation.
2. The account shows some analysis.
3. There is recognition of the worth of exploring motives for behaviour
4. There is willingness to be critical of action.
5. Relevant and helpful detail is explored where it has value.
6. There is recognition of the overall effect of the event on self – in other words, there is some 'standing back' from the event.
7. The account is written at one point in time. It does not, therefore, demonstrate the recognition that views can change with time and more reflection. In other words the account does not indicate a recognition that frames of reference affect the manner in which we reflect at a given time

### **C) This account shows quite deep reflection, and it does incorporate a recognition that the frame of reference with which an event is viewed can change**

1. Self questioning is evident (an 'internal dialogue' is set up at times) deliberating between different views of her own behaviour (different views of her own and others).
2. Marianne takes into account the views and motives of others and considers these against her own.
3. She recognises how prior experience, thoughts (own and other's) interact with the production of her own behaviour.
4. There is clear evidence of standing back from an event.
5. She helps herself to learn from the experience by splitting off the reflective processes from the points she wants to learn (by asterisk system).

6. There is recognition that the personal frame of reference can change according to the emotional state in which it is written, the acquisition of new information, the review of ideas and the effect of time passing.

### **Appendix 3**

#### **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 4 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](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](http://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>

### Writers on reflective practice

Boud  
Cinnamond & Zimpher (1990)  
Eraut (1994)  
Jarvis (1994)  
Kolb (1984)  
Mezirow (1991)  
Moon (2004)  
Schon (1983)  
Tennant (1997)  
Usher (1997)

### Writers of Learning

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

## Appendix 5 Group activity to support the development of realistic actions

### Group activity to support development of realistic actions

In your teams place copies of your action plan around the training room/ class room for course participants to read and make comments on. Such comments may include questions starting with

Have you thought of?

What do you hope to achieve through this?

Why?

Why?

Revans (1983) suggest the following questions may be provide a useful

What am I trying to do?

What is stopping me?

What can I do about it?

Who knows what I am trying to do?

Who cares about what I am trying to do?

Who else can do anything to help?

**Appendix 6 Group activity to support the development of reflective writing**

Using one of the models suggested below 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.

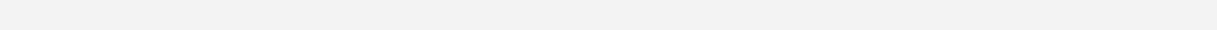
- |                       |                         |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| A conflict            | An extremity of emotion |
| A moment of joy       | A dilemma               |
| A misunderstanding    | A celebration           |
| As missed opportunity | A success   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

Event	
Reflective Account	

The tutor/ facilitator should suggest that these are circulated and others comment upon the level of reflection within the account using the guidance provided from the work documented in the park case study – Appendix 2

**Appendix 7 Templates for recording reflective accounts**

**Model 1      Gibbs' Reflective Cycle**



Event Description	
Feelings	
Evaluation	
Analysis	
Conclusion	
Action Plan	

**Model 2 Rolfe’s So What? Model**

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