



A workshop on Reflective Learning



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Summary

Introduction

Developing an understanding of reflection

definition

reflection and learning

reflection and emotion

Factors that affect the quality of reflection

introducing reflection

depth of reflection

the learner's conception of knowledge

Assessment of reflection

Exercises to promote reflection



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

"What is it?" Harry asked shakily.

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

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

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



Some vocabulary of reflection

- **Reflection**
- **reflective learning**
- **reflective writing**
- **reflective practice**



A 'common-sense' definition of reflection

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

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

based on Moon (1999)



Reflection in an academic context:

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

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

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



Where do differing views of reflection in the literature fit in? They arise from outcomes...

- **Learning and material for further reflection**
- **action**
- **critical review**
- **personal and continuing professional development**
- **reflection on own learning**
- **the building of theory**
- **decision-making or resolution of problems**
- **empowerment and emancipation**
- **creative activities**
- **emotional development**
- **etc**



How do we learn from reflection?



How we learn from reflection

- Where there is no new material of learning
- where there is new material of learning
- learn from the representation of learning
- working with ill-structured ideas
- enhances conditions of learning
 - gives intellectual space
 - enhances ownership
 - facilitates metacognition (learning to learn)
 - personally expressive material good for learning
 - helps emotional aspects of learning



Emotion and reflection



Emotion and reflection

- **Management of the emotions of others (emotional intelligence)**
- **emotion is the subject matter of reflection**
- **emotion affects the process of reflecting**
- **emotion arises in the process of reflection**
- **emotions that are not directly related to the topic of reflection may block or facilitate reflection**
- **Emotion may trigger reflection**
- **'emotional insight'**



Factors that affect the quality of reflection



The deepening of reflection

There are shifts:

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



Assessment of reflective writing

- Are you interested in process or product?
- Choose relevant assessment criteria
- *.....but remember that people learn a lot while working on assessment tasks.....*
- I think of reflective writing as 'raw material' - and would prefer to assess secondary reflection because:
 - students will have learnt more
 - I can be clearer about assessment criteria



Some journal / reflective writing techniques

- **Provide intellectual space - 'stop and think'**
- **structure reflection with questions**
- **dialogue techniques**
- **work with others**
- **use discussion integrated with time for reflection**