UNIT THREE: REFLECTION ON AND IN THE WORK PLACE

Introduction

Reflection involves describing, analysing and evaluating our thoughts, assumptions, beliefs, theories and actions (Fade 2005). Since the aim of placement is to promote "Clinical reasoning and analytical and evaluation abilities in students" (McClure 2005) reflection in central to development of reflective practice. It is assumed that reflection in a process that is engaged in as part of learning, however, reflection is a skill which needs developed and enhanced.

Aim of unit

This unit aims to identify the importance of reflection in teaching and learning and to discuss how it might be used in the workplace. The different models of reflection will be considered and how you can assist the learner in reflecting upon their practice/work and learning whilst at the same time enhancing your own reflective skills.

Outcomes of Unit

At the end of this unit of learning you will be able to:

1. Discuss the use of reflection in learning
2. Identify barriers to reflection and ways to minimize there effects
3. Use a model of reflection to facilitate student learning in the workplace
4. Facilitate a process where the learner reflects critically on their practice/work

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What is Reflection?

The image of looking at oneself in a mirror, suggested by the word, means that it has implications of being conscious of what one is doing. Because of this it is a word that is widely used but not always understood. Rowntree (1988), for example, praises the reflective student who thinks about her own experience of studying and decides what changes of approach might be most suitable.

Rowntree (1988) says reflection is studying one's own study methods as seriously as one studies the subject and thinking about a learning task after you have done it. Unless you do this, he says, the task will almost certainly be wasted.

In any learning situation, he says, you should prepare for it beforehand, participate actively during it, and reflect on it afterwards.

He applies these points to working in small groups, suggesting note taking in the group as an aid to reflection afterwards, and also suggesting reflection on how the group operates. It is important, therefore, that reflection is on what is happening in the workplace and why the learning is different or unique because it is happening in the workplace.

ACTIVITY:

It is important before teaching others that you have some understanding of your own learning styles and how you reflect upon events. This activity assists you in this process.

How do you reflect on your current professional practice?

Can you give three examples of how reflection has led to changes and improvements in your professional practice?

How could you further develop your reflection style?

Types of Reflection

Schön (1987) in his work identifies two types of reflection; these are reflection-in-action (thinking on your feet) and reflection-on-action (retrospective thinking). He suggests that reflection is used by practitioners when they encounter situations that are unique, and when individuals may not be able to apply known theories or techniques previously learnt through formal education.

Definitions of Reflection

Dewey (1933) defined reflection as: an active persistent and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it and the further conclusion to which it tends.

Boud et al. (1985) take a different perspective and define it as:
A generic term for those intellectual and effective activities in which individuals engage to explore their experiences in order to lead to a new understanding and appreciation.

Boud and his co-writers view reflection from the learner's point of view. They discuss the relationship of the reflective process and the learning experience against what the learner can do.

Reid (1993) in her definition also noted reflection as an active process rather than passive thinking. She states:
"Reflection is a process of reviewing an experience of practice in order to describe, analyse, evaluate and so inform learning about practice."(p3)

Kemmis (1985) agrees with Reid that the process of reflection is more than a process that focuses 'on the head'. It is, he argues, a positive active process that reviews, analyses and

evaluates experiences, draws on theoretical concepts or previous learning and so provides an action plan for future experiences.

Johns (1995) notes that reflection enables the practitioner to assess understand and learn through their experiences. It is a personal process that usually results in some change for the individual in their perspective of a situation or creates new learning for the individual.

Reflection starts with the individual or group and their own experiences and can result, if applied to practice, in improvement of the clinical skills performed by the individual through new knowledge gained on reflection. Clamp (1980) noted that nurses' attitudes largely govern how care is administered to their client and the commonest causes of poor care are ignorance and inappropriate attitudes. This process of reflection, if then related into practice, can assist the individual in gaining the required knowledge, leading to a potential improvement in the quality of the care received from that individual. The outcome of reflection as identified by Mezirow (1981) is learning. Louden (1991) describes in ordinary language reflection as serious and sober thought at some distance from action and has connotations similar to "meditation" and "introspection ". It is a mental process which takes place out of the stream of action, looking forward or (usually) back to actions that have taken place.
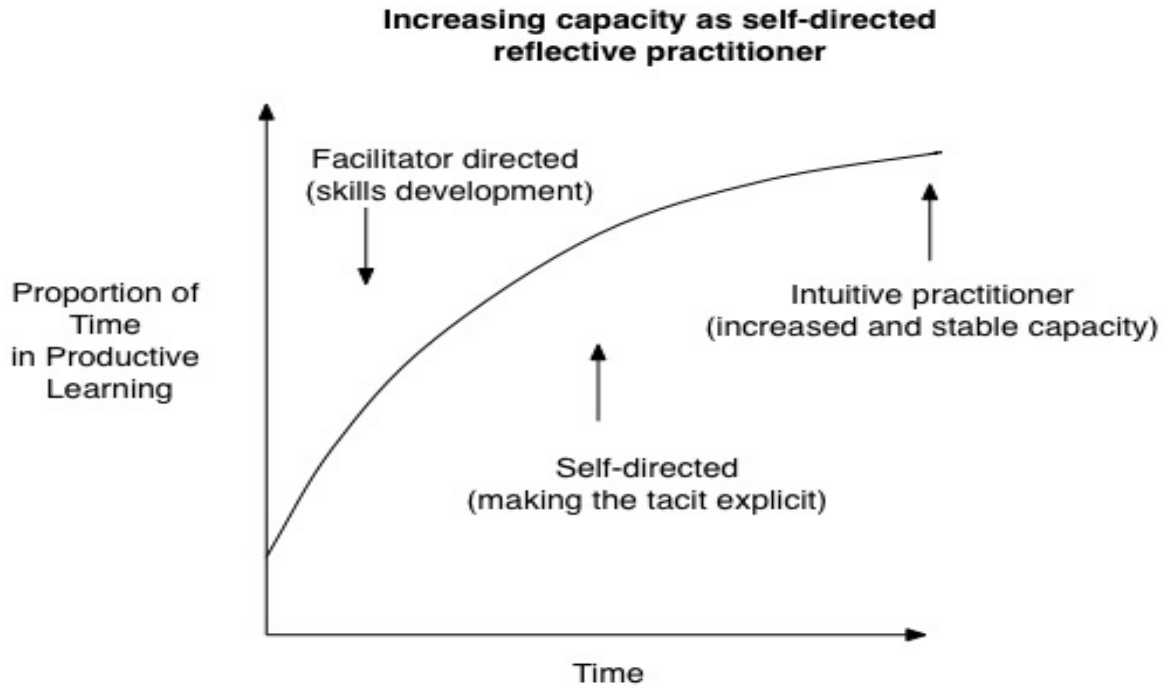

ACTIVITY:

Reflection is central to professional practice. This activity asks you to reflect upon how you do this.

How do you currently encourage students to reflect on their practice?

Think about how your students learn. How could you introduce reflection to students in a way that will motivate them to become more reflective?

Reflection and Professional Learning

Increasing capacity as self-directed reflective practitioner

Facilitator directed
(skills development)

Proportion of
Time
in Productive
Learning

Intuitive practitioner
(increased and stable capacity)

Self-directed
(making the tacit explicit)

Time

Stephen Powell 2004

Critically Reflective Learning is nurtured by relationships between teacher and learner, learner and learner and between both with the subject under study. Powell (2004) identified the optimal relationship above, as mutual, open, challenging, contextually aware and characterised by dialogue. (Brockbank & McGill 1998)

Becoming a Reflective Practitioner/Worker

According to the educator Boud et al. (1985), effective learning will not occur unless you reflect. To do this, you must think of a particular moment in time, ponder over it, go back through it and only then will you gain new insights into different aspects of that situation. According to Kolb (1984) reflecting is an essential element of learning. This is shown through an experiential learning cycle illustrated below.

McClure (2005) suggests that if you follow this cycle in a clockwise direction with your student,

you will see that after having had an experience the student has to reflect on what he/she saw or

did, by reviewing the whole situation in his/her mind. This may be assisted by: looking at it on

film, discussing it with others, thinking abstractly about the event for a while, or seeking advice or
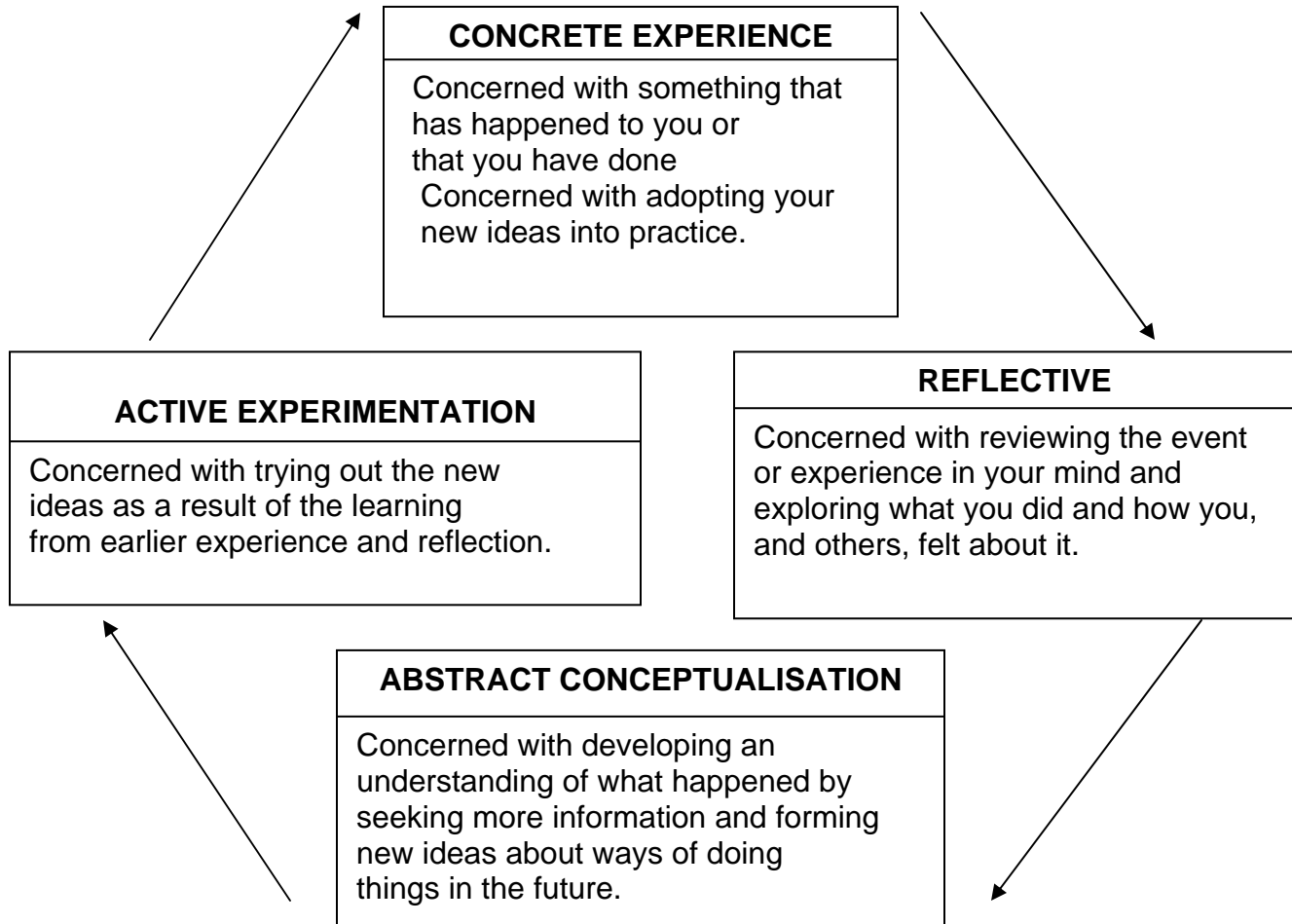
further information.

Eventually the student will probably come up with ideas for approaching the situation differently next time. He/she will then try out their ideas to see if they are effective. He/she will thus complete the learning cycle and start over again with a view to refining his/her actions. This is an ongoing process, so we will never achieve perfection. We will always find other ways of doing things based on our learning from previous experiences.

Building up experience is a gradual process. The student will develop reflective abilities during the course of their learning on placement. Reflection should initially develop in safe environments where mistakes are tolerated. He/she can then reflect and discuss the decisions that were made during their supervision sessions with their work-based supervisor. Reflection should become integral to these sessions.

When reflecting-on-action, the first step in the process is the description of the incident and it is advisable that student health care practitioners keep a reflective diary, as memory cannot be relied upon for the detail of events, in which they record details of incidents that either troubled or pleased them, recording details as soon after the event as possible.

Much attention has been given to the value of recording events and experiences in written form, particularly through the use of reflective diaries and journals (Zubbrizarreta 1999 and Tryssenaar 1995). The exercise of diary writing promotes both the qualities required for reflection, i.e. open-mindedness and motivation, and also the skills i.e. self-awareness; description and observation; critical analysis and problem-solving; and synthesis and evaluation (Richardson & Maltby 1995).

Kolb's Learning Cycle (Kolb 1984)

CONCRETE EXPERIENCE
Concerned with something that has happened to you or that you have done Concerned with adopting your new ideas into practice.

ACTIVE EXPERIMENTATION
Concerned with trying out the new ideas as a result of the learning from earlier experience and reflection.

REFLECTIVE
Concerned with reviewing the event or experience in your mind and exploring what you did and how you, and others, felt about it.

ABSTRACT CONCEPTUALISATION
Concerned with developing an understanding of what happened by seeking more information and forming new ideas about ways of doing things in the future.

Time for Reflection

McClure (2005) continues to identify how important the time for reflection is. The work-based supervisor must make time for reflection so that it becomes part of your and the student's way of working. Reflection is an integral part of practice and students need time to develop this skill. It is not a process that can be rushed, but neither is it a process that has to occur at a particular time. Thus, the student can reflect on his/her journey to and from placement, or between activities or during lunch break. It is a good idea to encourage the student to sum up each day with a reflective comment in his/her diary, spending only a few minutes doing it. If the student knows that you expect them to reflect on their practice in this structured way, they will be more likely to keep and benefit from their reflective diary. You may also set them an example by keeping a reflective diary of your own professional practice or indeed your experiences as a work-based supervisor, thus demonstrating that learning is always ongoing!

Keeping a Reflective Diary

Each individual will have a different way of keeping a reflective diary. There are, however, some general points to reinforce to learners about their diary.

It should be:

- A record which is useful to you
- A cue to memory
- Honestly written
- Enjoyable to you in its production

It can be used:

- To describe key events in your practice
- To evaluate key events in your practice
- To engage in focused evaluation of recurring themes
- Reflect on what may have become habitual
- Develop and appraise action taken

Getting Started:

- Set aside time for writing
- Allow time for the sifting of thoughts and ideas
- Do not worry about style, presentation
- Remember that the aim is to facilitate reflection on practice
- Find evidence to back-up your thoughts: what evidence do I have for what I have just written?

Begin by asking:

- How do I see my role as a student on workplace placement (purposes and intentions)?
- Why did I become a student?
- What kind of practitioner do I think I am?
- What values do I believe in?
- How do I demonstrate that I am practising in a way that is consistent with relevant professional values and codes of conduct?

Reflective Questions

The following is a set of questions that could be used to assist your thinking, perhaps when you are writing up your reflections on practice in a diary or when you are thinking back over an experience and discussing it with your work-based supervisor.

- What was I aiming for when I did that?
- What exactly did I do? How would I describe it precisely?
- Why did I choose that particular action?
- What theories/models/research informed my actions?
- What was I trying to achieve?
- What did I do next?
- What were the reasons for doing that?
- How successful was it?
- What criteria am I using to judge success?
- What alternatives were there?
- Could I have dealt with the situation any better?
- How would I do it differently next time?
- What do I feel about the whole experience?
- What knowledge/values/skills were demonstrated?
- How did the client feel about it?
- How do I know the client felt like that?
- What sense can I make of this in the light of my past experience?
- Has this changed the way in which I will do things in the future?

A final note

- Reflective diaries are a private record of experiences throughout placement and so it is important to use them to report thoughts, feelings and opinions rather than merely the factual events of the day. Only by reporting personal feelings following an event can experiences be built upon and improved.

- It is important to use the reflective diary to record positive experiences and achievements as well as the not so positive ones. A balanced view of what has taken place is essential.

- Reflective diaries are not just important during placement - I kept my reflective diary and think of it to be, to some extent, rather like a personal 'Record of Achievement'.

ACTIVITY:

Having considered the need for reflection and the methods available to assist in this undertake the following activity to explore how you can reflection in students learning in the workplace.

What methods would you use to ensure students were discussing their reflections with you?

Effective Reflection Supervision and Assessment in the Work Place

Reflection is not an 'add-on' piece to your learning process, portfolio, or teaching practice. It is integral to the complex process of becoming an educator. Successful reflection enables self-awareness, personal and professional growth and improved teaching practices.

Reflection may be accomplished individually and collectively. You will have opportunities to reflect on your experiences and teaching with others, such as, peers, other mentors, supervisors and university lecturers. Each will bring a unique perspective to your understanding of yourself developing as an effective work-based supervisor.

Ultimately, self-reflection and dialogue with others will result in insights as to:

1. how and why you think the way you do about teaching, learning and assessment
2. what actions you took, what choices you made
3. the meaning of your actions and choices
4. what learning and growth has occurred
5. how you can change your practices in the future
6. what you believe is the social value of education
7. what you believe is your role as a professional and educator

What is the purpose of reflection?

Dewey (1933) stated "reflection thus implies that something is believed in (or disbelieved in), not on its own direct account, but through something else which stands as witness, evidence, proof, voucher, warrant; that is, as ground of belief." (p.11). For Dewey, reflective thinking consisted of

two parts: a state of doubt and a search to resolve that doubt. Thus, constructing a portfolio is an act of revealing one's beliefs. Schon (1987) considered a utility for reflective thinking in that cognitive practice has a direct relationship to practices within professional realms (teaching). Davis et al. (1997) extend this idea in that the process of education mirrors the design process with reflective thinking being central to both. At the heart of portfolio development is purposeful choice making. The portfolio development process is organic.

Your portfolio can be entered into again and again with new reflections that can provide new insights.

Where do you put the reflections in your portfolio?

Your portfolio is an assessment portfolio. This means that it includes a collection of selected artefacts and focused reflections and goals that demonstrate how you have met the learning outcomes. Reflections should be infused throughout your portfolio.

What makes good evidence?

The search for evidence is a quest for quality. The reflection process will assist you to determine how evidence is collected, and presented. Evidence selection requires that you place value upon an experience or event. As you develop your portfolio, you will be gathering evidence that demonstrate your competencies in each of the Standards 1-8. A good piece of evidence is:

- Carefully selected
- Represents the standard
- Demonstrates your competencies of the standard
- Presented professionally
- Personally meaningful
- Paired with a relevant and insightful reflection (reflections can be written, audio or videotaped.

ACTIVITY:

Evidence is an essential part of the reflective process. This activity asks you to look at the following:

What evidence would you select/use to demonstrate your competence and

development as a workplace supervisor?

What do you think would best demonstrate student's learning in your workplace?

Learning through and from reflection

If the student can be 'coached' to identify the thought processes undergone to move from ignorance to understanding - to reflect on his own learning - then learning can continue at a much swifter pace and with less support from the mentor/educator.

For a minority of lecturers the label says it all. Their self image is of a subject expert whose main task is to deliver knowledge and then to test whether the message has been properly received and understood. Learning is assumed to be happening despite the clear evidence to the contrary.

Mentoring and Reflective Practice

Gillings (2000) states that commitment to self-enquiry and readiness to change practice are important if the individual is to get the most out of the process.

Many authors identify self-awareness as essential to the reflective process. This implies that the individual needs to be well informed/appraised of his/her own character, including beliefs and values. Many models of reflective practice also include self-awareness and questioning of beliefs, values and attitudes.

The last stage of many models of reflection relates to a willingness to change practice, where new conceptual perspectives are reached in order to inform practice. If the learner is not willing to change practice he/she will not gain the potential benefits from the process in terms of practice development, advances will not be made and professional practice will not evolve.

Many of the skills identified as essential for a good supervisor are required by the work-based supervisor to guide the reflective practitioner. A willingness to commit time to the process and to listen to the learner helps foster a relationship that can bring challenging issues to the fore.

There are many similarities between reflective practice and supervision, therefore learners can make effective use of reflective practice as a learning tool within the context of supervision. It is however important that the learner and the work-based supervisor are committed to the process and have a shared understanding of the process to make the experience effective. (McClure 2005)

Supervision

Supervision can be both formal and informal. Informal feedback is given regularly and constructively in a non judgemental way. Formal supervision, should occur regularly at prearranged times in a quiet environment free from the distractions of service delivery. Supervision sessions should last about one hour and form an essential feature of the placement and supervisory process. Alsop and Ryan (1996) state that formal supervision should be used for four main purposes:

1. reflection, feedback on and dialogue about practice
2. review of the achievement of learning goals
3. revision of the learning contract, until the next supervision session
4. exploration of practice issues to a deeper level of understanding

Therefore, formal supervision is a time for exploring practice, a time for learning, where the real objective is facilitating the students' growth. Work-based supervisors must therefore ensure that they acknowledge the importance of these sessions and allocate appropriate time for them.

Both the work-based supervisor and the student need to prepare well for the formal supervision sessions. The student needs to be encouraged to think through selected experiences, reviewing them in his/her mind, so that he/she learns from what happened. The work-based supervisor may guide the discussion, prompting the student and probing his/her knowledge and understanding, but essentially the student must do the work. This must then be recorded in the relevant form

Learning from significant events

Each of us in our professional lives is likely to face a variety of critical incidents during which an ethical dilemma arises. Often we handle such dilemmas by reacting based on our past experiences, our emotional health at the time, and/or "what seems to be right." However, it is possible to be proactive, rather than reactive, and use an ethical decision making process to guide your responses. The purpose of this section is to show how this might work.

Brockett/Hiemstra Ethics Decision-Making Process

Brockett and Hiemstra (1991) have developed an ethics decision-making process that can be used for critical incident sorting and analysis. We believe it provides the kind of information needed to help you make appropriate ethical decisions. Once you get used to the process and have it incorporated as part of your professional skills, such decisions can become automatic for many of the incidents you will face. Thus, whenever you are faced with some sort of actual or potential ethical dilemma, we suggest you consider an interaction of your personal values with the obligations you have to others and consider the consequences of any actions in light of these values and obligations.

For example, the following questions might be helpful groundings for your personal values:

1. What do I believe about human nature, the education of adults, and about ethics?
2. How committed am I to these beliefs I hold?
3. Which basic values actually drive my practice as a professional adult educator?

In terms of personal obligations, ask yourself such questions as these:

1. To whom am I responsible?
2. To what extent is the dilemma I am facing a result of conflicting obligations (this often will be the case)?

Then consider the consequences of any of your actions:

1. What are my options?
2. What are possible consequences of my actions?
3. Which option is most consistent with my values?

Obviously, some actions or decisions must be made on the spot and time for the kind of critical reflection we are suggesting will be limited. However, whenever it is possible we suggest taking your decision-making process through a more deliberate process like the one described above. We believe that not only will you be more likely to stay consistent with your ethical dimensions of practice; you also will begin to incorporate such a decision-making framework within your daily practice. Subsequently, ethical decision-making will come easier and quicker for you. The following incident illustrates how this can occur.

A Simulated Critical Incident

As a brand new Assistant Professor, Dr. Smith realized that "publish or perish" was a very real characteristic of his institution. His Department Chair had explained clearly the importance of scholarship as well as good teaching and service to his university, community, and profession. Thus, he set about building a research agenda, establishing a regular schedule for research and writing, and learning from his experienced colleagues.

Thus, he was flattered when at the end of his first year he was approached by one of the Senior Professors in the College and asked if he would be interested in co-authoring some research articles. He and the senior professor then established a research project, collected and analyzed some appropriate data, and began the process of writing two articles. Dr. Smith agreed to be the junior author on such articles and the writing efforts were fairly equally shared.

The senior professor undertook the responsibility of finding a journal for the two articles and he handled all the communications. He happily reported back to Dr. Smith within a few weeks that a journal had agreed to publish both articles in a special issue on adult education. Approximately six months later Dr. Smith received from the senior professor a couple of copies of the journal containing the two articles. Overall it had been a good learning experience, it helped enhance Dr. Smith's reputation within the College, increased his confidence, and was an important step in the movement toward eventual promotion.

Unfortunately, the story did not end at that happy juncture. At the end of that year, Dr. Smith received in the mail from the publisher a letter thanking him for his contributions to the journal that year and his personal wishes that the income from the efforts would be useful in helping fund future research. Dr. Smith called the publisher for clarification and was told that the senior professor had been sent a check for a certain sum of money and he had told the publisher he would take out money to cover incurred expenses and then send a check to me.

This created a real ethical dilemma for Dr. Smith. Without much thought, he confronted the senior professor and demanded to know what had happened. The senior professor quickly explained that he had forgotten to send Dr. Smith a check and promptly wrote one out. However, because others were in the office when this happened, it was an embarrassing situation and a real professional distance was created that lasted throughout the time Dr. Smith was at that university. Unfortunately, no additional co-authoring between these two individuals took place.

Could Dr. Smith have handled it differently? What were the long-term ramifications?

Critical Incident Sorting and Analysis

Dr. Smith did not go through any sort of decision-making process. Out of personal anger, and perhaps arrogance, he publicly confronted the senior professor without discussing various possibilities or explanations. This resulted in public embarrassment for the senior professor, a lost opportunity to find out what was the real story, and the creation of a "distance" that may have been, in the long run, detrimental to Dr. Smith and the adult education profession. Certainly, there is the possibility that the senior professor purposely overlooked making the payment, but it was never possible to determine that fact.

Personal values sorting possible for Dr. Smith if he had asked some of the following questions:

1. What do I believe about human nature, the education of adults, and about ethics?

- I have a basic trust in others
- There is real value in making any sort of a contribution to the education of adults
- I have a basic belief in professional honesty

2. How committed am I to the beliefs I hold?

- Each of these beliefs should be a central core for my actions
- I must constantly work to uphold these beliefs
- I also have a need to believe that others share in some of these basic beliefs

3. Which basic values actually drive my practice as a professional adult educator?

- I value humanistic beliefs and a notion that the dignity of each human being must be respected - these serve as a foundation for what I do as a professional
- I try hard to be consistent not only in what I do as a professional but also in my role as spouse, parent, friend, and community member
- The reality that I embrace rests on an assumption that all humans are basically good and have potential for continuous growth and development as individuals

Personal Obligation Sorting:

1. To whom am I responsible?

- I am responsible not only for myself, but also for what my actions might do in terms of relationships with others
- I also have a responsibility to insure that good research and scholarship results in accurate and useful information being disseminated to practitioners and other researchers

2. To what extent was the dilemma I faced a result of conflicting obligations?

- I had an obligation to protect the income my family received
- I had an obligation to protect the reputation of the senior professor if possible
- I had an obligation to stay true to my humanistic values and beliefs

3. What were the possible consequences of the actions I took (or might have taken)?

- My options could have included discussing the situation with the senior professor behind closed doors to find out what really happened
- Another option could have been to simply forget the whole situation because of the value I received from the experience, the counsel and support from the senior professor, and the knowledge that I had contributed information about adult education to a population of readers who otherwise might not have received the information
- One real consequence was the fact that I never again had an opportunity to work with this professor (and some of his close colleagues)
- Another consequence was that my public confrontation no doubt raised questions in the minds of others about me and that senior professor
- The very first option noted above would have been most consistent with my values and might have resulted in a clearer understanding of what happened plus future co-authoring opportunities that could have further benefited many audiences

ACTIVITY:

Think of a recent dilemma you have had to deal with whilst supervising a student. Use the Decision Making Process model to analyse how you dealt with this dilemma. (This may be useful to include in your portfolio)

Tools for Reflection

Reflective thinking is a multifaceted process. It is an analysis of events and circumstances. By virtue of its complexity, the task of teaching requires constant and continual observation, evaluation, and subsequent action. However, to be an effective work-based supervisor, it is not enough to be able to recognize what happens in the work place. Rather, it is imperative to understand the "why's," "how's," and "what if's" as well. This understanding comes through the consistent practice of reflective thinking.

Reflective thinking is a learned process that requires time. Generally there is little, if any, time left at the day's end to reflect on previous events, and to design meaningful, creative problem-solving strategies. However, given the intent of the student teaching experience, time for reflection should be a critical and ongoing practice. The following are some examples of activities that promote reflection and may be tailored to fit into the working day and beyond.

Think Aloud: Intentionally express out loud thinking about your learning. This is especially effective when teaching the student how to plan. It uncovers the reasoning behind making decisions. Another component of the think aloud is describing and analysing positive and negative experiences as they surface. This can be a therapeutic and valuable tool that can be accomplished on ones own or in conjunction with individuals from the mentoring team.

Reflective Journal: This is a process of recording and analysing events in a prescribed manner and it can be a productive strategy to foster reflective thinking. The journal process may be formal or informal. It can be a description of a significant event or an aspect of learning on which a student is asked to focus.

Competency Continuum: Think about the areas in teaching identified in the student's learning outcomes.   Begin by identifying the factors that inhibit the student's ability to be more competent and identify what would be most helpful to gain more competencies. Use this continuum as a tool for discussion and action planning between you and your student.

Data Collection/Action Research: Consider a problem area such as student motivation that concerns you. Intentionally design a procedure for collecting information (data) to learn more about the problem. Use this data to further analyse the situation, to act on the problem, or to re-evaluate.

Video/Audio Tape and Reflective Analysis: Video or audio tape your teaching. View or listen to the tape for the purpose of analysing your instruction and student response. The video or audio tape may be used as a tool for reflective dialogue between the student and you. It could be combined with a journal entry.

Written Self-Evaluation: This is a structured self analysis.

Use of the Problem Solving Process: This six step process may be used for any problem situation in or out of the classroom setting. It is intended as a tool for collaborative or individual problem solving and reflective thinking as well as a design for action.

1. Identify the problem
2. Generate possible solutions
3. Evaluate the solutions
4. Design an action plan
5. Implement the plan
6. Evaluate the results

Coaching and Conferencing Process: This is a process that occurs on a regular basis during the student teaching experience. It provides an opportunity to talk about teaching and learning

and should be a natural flow of conversation that includes sharing ideas, giving and receiving formative feedback. This process may be ongoing and informal, or scheduled and structured. It may or may not include an observation. The intent of the process is to engage in an activity that promotes dialogue about teaching effectiveness, and encourages reflective thinking about teaching, learning, and performance.

Development of a Professional Portfolio: The process of creating and selecting documents for inclusion in the portfolio requires a significant amount of reflective thinking about yourself as a teacher and your growth related to the performance standards for student teaching. It is an opportunity to talk about your experience and performance with the individuals who form your mentoring team. It can be one of the most intensive processes for reflection.

Individual Reflection

The presence of others can support individual learning in many ways, but it is also good to provide individuals with some personal time and space to reflect - away from the distractions of others. However, being alone is no guarantee of high quality reflection: when alone, attention can wander or people get stuck in a rut as they keep going through the same patterns of thought or visiting the same dead ends. But find the right setting or technique for individual reflection and you can help people see with fresh eyes, or lead them to 'aha' moments, or help them break out of 'same-old' thinking. Here are just some options for 'reviewing for one':

- **Unstructured Reflective Writing**: using log books, diaries, journals, notebooks.
- **Structured Reflective Writing**: responding to a questionnaire or to a standard template of questions or headings following a particular sequence.
- **Graphic Reflection Techniques**: creating diagrams, charts, graphs, maps, patterns, drawings, collages or photos to capture reflections.
- **Scavenger Hunt**: searching for symbolic objects that answer reflective questions
- **Solo**: time alone without distractions and space to think, or to read feedback notes from other group members, or as a challenge in itself - to live alone and close to nature with time to reflect.
- **Guided Reflection**: listening to a monologue that includes pauses for thought
- **Silence**: context is all important, but well timed silences in suitable settings can result in deep reflection.
- **Reflection Time**: following a stimulating story, performance or experience.
- **Thinking Time**: before making a reflective statement about recent events.
- **Preparation Time**: before making a presentation about personal learning to the group.

Some of the above individual reviewing techniques can work surprisingly well, but often the best way to make a breakthrough is reviewing with another person, for example a colleague.

Reviewing for Two: Roles For Reviewing In Pairs

Talking things through with another person can be more dynamic and productive than being left with your own thoughts. Sometimes the other person is just a listener, but there are many other useful roles the other person can adopt - such as a sounding board, a summariser, a buddy, a coach, or even a devil's advocate. There is no guarantee that the other person will be good at assisting the process of reflection. The other person may be too intrusive or challenging, or may stumble into 'no go' areas, or offer insensitive advice. There is always the risk that the other person (even a skilled facilitator) will spoil, distort or disrupt the process of reflection. The risk of ending up with an 'unhelpful' listener can be reduced by providing clear briefings and by providing an easy way for the 'speaker' to change the rules or opt out if they find the process is not working well.

Here are a few helpful roles that the 'other person' can play when reviewing in pairs:

- **Listener:** just listens - giving the 'reflector' the opportunity to think aloud
- **Sounding Board:** listens and responds to any questions the reflector may ask
- **Summariser:** repeats key phrases, summarises, asks for clarification
- **Buddy:** notices, empathises, supports, and possibly advises
- **Coach:** agrees objectives, provides feedback, and asks questions that assist reflection
- I**nterviewer** (with a script): asks set questions or follows a certain review sequence
- **Child:** just keeps asking 'why?'. The reflector can stop the process at any point.
- **Devil's Advocate:** tests and challenges what the reflector says. This needs careful briefing to ensure that the challenges are provided and perceived as being part of a helpful process.

Reviewing for Two: Walking And Talking

Something that goes particularly well with paired reviews is 'walking and talking' - especially if you have a suitable outdoor location. 'Walking and Talking' can be combined with any of the above roles. A classic problem in paired reviews is that one person dominates and the time is not well shared. One solution is to divide the total time into two halves by having a clear 'swap over point' at half way (see 'Out and Back'). Another solution is to have a turn-taking system in which there is frequent swapping of roles (see 'Chat Cards'). These and other variations of 'walking and talking' are described next:

- **Out and Back:** 'Out and back' helps to ensure that the time is divided equally between each person. Pairs walk out to an agreed point, swap roles and walk back in their new roles. (See previous section for ideas about 'roles'.) Ideally, each pair heads for a different point to avoid distractions from other pairs.
- **Chat Cards:** Each card has a reflective question. Each person takes it in turns to answer as they walk. One question per card helps people to focus on one question at a time. Just one good question may be enough for some pairs, but other pairs may need a plentiful supply of questions to keep a reflective conversation going. It is better to have too many questions than too few.
- **Scavenger Hunt:** Pairs work together to collect symbolic objects that answer reflective questions.
- **Walking Round the Active Reviewing Cycle:** As pairs walk through each stage the cycle, they focus their reflective conversation on the stage they are walking through. In practice this takes two or three minutes in each stage, so you either need a huge cycle or people simply stop and talk until they are ready to move on to the next stage.

Reviewing for Two: Changing Partners

Another style of paired review is where people have a series of brief meetings with different partners. The speed of this process means that people do not get stuck in partnerships that are not working. There may not be very deep reflection during brief meetings, but a quick succession of paired reflective conversations can quickly add up to a lot of reflection from various angles in a short space of time. Your choice of methods will partly depend on how important it is that everyone meets everyone else.

- **Milling about:** (for one to one feedback): Find a partner, give each other one positive statement about their contribution to the team exercise, find a new partner and repeat, etc.
- **Brief Encounters:** (questions and partners keep changing): Each person starts with a unique question on a card and finds a partner. Each person answers their partner's question. They swap cards and each finds a new partner.

- **Surveys:** (small groups specialise in one question): Subgroups scatter throughout the whole group conducting brief one to one interviews on the topic in which they are specialising. Subgroups meet together again to collate the answers and report back their findings to the whole group.
- **Mad Hatter's Tea Party:** Two lines face each other. People talk with the person standing opposite. At a given signal, everyone moves one to the left and starts talking with their new partner. The facilitator announces a fresh question at each move. If the group is too big to complete a full cycle, set up a suitable number of smaller groups.
- **Concentric Circles:** This is much the same idea as the Mad Hatter's Tea Party, but is a little easier to set up and manage. This structure does not allow participants to have conversations with people in their own circle, but it does provide an effective way of meeting and learning one-to-one with everyone in another group
- **Matrix Meetings:** Each individual has a list of everyone's names. They place a mark beside the name of anyone they work with on a paired reviewing exercise of (say) five minutes or more. From time to time they also enter this information on a single group matrix that builds up a picture of who has worked with whom. A number or letter code can be used to give basic information about who took which role during the exercise(e.g. L=learner, F=facilitator, S= shared). If the target is to complete the matrix, remember to provide enough opportunities for paired reviewing for this to be achievable.

Not all pairings work well - one person can dominate, trust may be low, pairs may decide to take easy options, or just go through the motions or may even opt out. Group facilitators may try to avoid the risks of paired reviews not working well by keeping everyone together under their own watchful eye for whole group reflection. But whole group reflection has its own risks and disadvantages (such lack of personal space, less personal attention and less airtime for each individual). The challenge is to find the right mix (and sequence) of different group sizes (including reflective time alone) so that there is a good balance between these different 'social settings' for reflection.

ACTIVITY:

Identify the stages and tasks a student experiences whilst on placement. Highlight how you will integrate reflection throughout each stage and task.

Summary

In summary reflection is central to the learning experience. This unit has considers what is reflection and how it can be used in the learning process. The barriers to reflection and the role of the supervisor in mentoring the reflective process is also identified and discussed. . How we can learn from specific events and the different strategies which may be adopted to assist in the reflective process have also been identified. A number of activities have been presented throughout this unit to assist you in applying the theory to your own situation. The reference and bibliography should also assist you in obtaining more information about reflection in and on the work place

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