

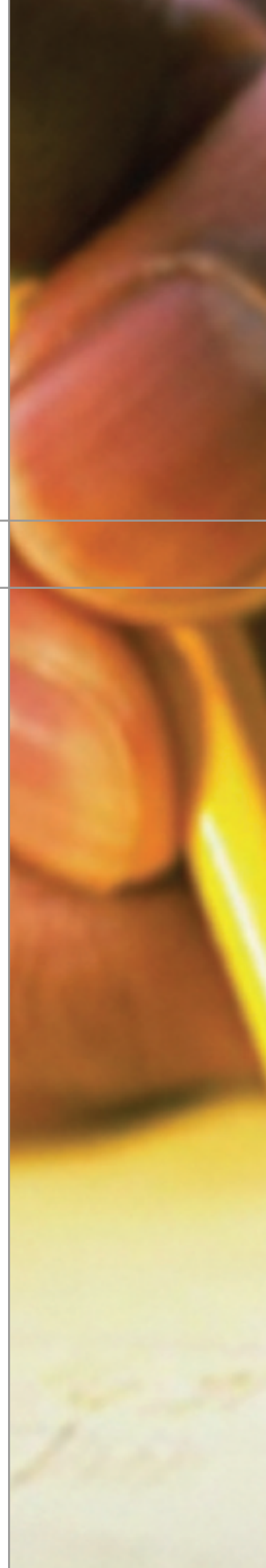
Reflection on PRACTICE

A resource commissioned by the Making Practice Based Learning Work project, an educational development project funded through FDTL Phase 4 Project Number 174/02 and produced by staff from the University of Ulster.

Author

Patricia McClure

School of Health Sciences, University of Ulster



contents



Reflection on **Practice**

Introduction	02
The Role of Reflective Practice	03
Time for Reflection	05
Pre-requisites for Effective Reflection and Supervision	09
The Process of a Supervision Session	11
Adopting a Mentoring Approach	12
Tensions and Anxieties in Practice Placement Learning for Students & Practice Educators	15
Appendix 1	16
Appendix 2	17
References	18

REFLECTION ON PRACTICE

Introduction

This resource tool has been devised to;

- inform practice educators about the importance of reflective practice
- prepare practice educators for their role as facilitators in students/learners' development of reflective practice skills
- identify strategies to facilitate students/learners' to reflect during supervision sessions
- provide guidelines for the use of reflective diaries during practice placements.

REFLECTION ON PRACTICE

The Role of Reflective Practice

What is reflective practice?

The general aim of all placements is to promote clinical reasoning and analytical and evaluative abilities in students through reflective practice. Professional bodies incorporate the benefits of applying reflective practice for both students and health professionals in their learning strategies. The importance of developing professional practice and of the role of supervision to ensure high quality standards of care is emphasised in such documents as "A Vision for the Future" (Department of Health 1993).

Reflective practice is not a new concept – Boud, Keogh and Walker (1985) stated 20 years ago that it features the individual and his or her experiences, leading to a new conceptual perspective or understanding. They included the element of learning, as well as involvement of the self, to define reflective practice: "Reflection is a forum of response of the learner to experience" (Boud et al. 1985, page18).

Johns and Freshwater (1998) also described the value of reflective practice as a means of learning. There is no doubt that "reflection" is a complex concept that has defied consensus on definition although some commonalities exist. It involves the self and is triggered by questioning of actions, values and beliefs. An understanding of the purpose of reflective practice and its components can be gained by considering some of the definitions provided in the literature. A few useful definitions include the following:

"Reflection is a process of reviewing an experience of practice in order to describe, analyse, evaluate and so inform learning about practice" (Reid, 1993 p.305).

"Reflective practice is something more than thoughtful practice. It is that form of practice that seeks to problematise many situations of professional performance so that they can become potential learning situations and so the practitioners can continue to learn, grow and develop in and through practice" (Jarvis, 1992 p.180).

Johns describes critical reflection as " a window through which the practitioner can view and focus self within the context of his/her own lived experience in ways that enable him/her to confront, understand and work towards resolving the contradictions within his/her practice between what is desirable and actual practice" (Johns 2000:34).

To maximise learning through critical reflection we need to contextually locate ourselves within the experience and explore available theory, knowledge and experience to understand the experience in different ways. Thus Boyd & Fales (1983 p.100) claim that critical reflection "is the core difference between whether a person repeats the same experience several times becoming highly proficient at one behaviour, or learns from experience in such a way that he or she is cognitively or affectively changed". Critical reflection is thus viewed as transformational learning which according to Baumgartner (2001) can happen either gradually or from a sudden or critical incident and alter the way people see themselves and their world.

Daloz (1999) advocated the concept of development. He believes in the role of a mentor in guiding the learner on a journey that is affected by their social environment including family dynamics and social class. Daloz (2000 p18) suggests that there are four important conditions in facilitating development which are;

"the presence of the other, reflective discourse, a mentoring community and opportunities for committed action."

Schon (1983) suggests that we can engage in reflection in one of two ways; either by 'reflecting on action', after the experience, or by 'reflecting in action', during the experience. The latter is a more advanced skill while the former is the process more likely to be used when teaching student healthcare professionals.

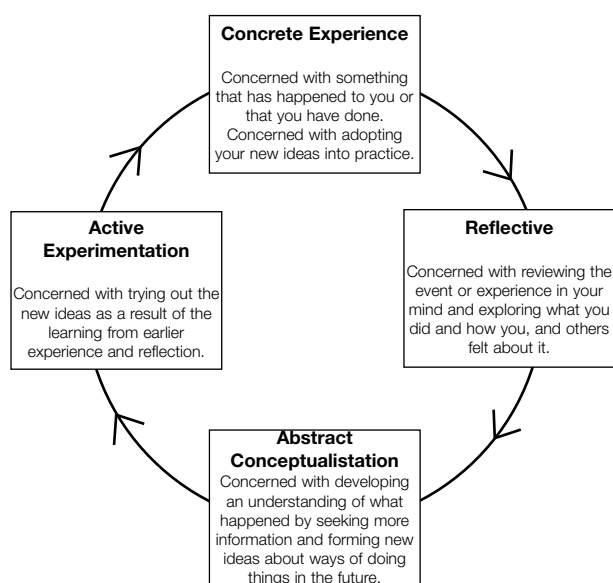
REFLECTION ON PRACTICE

The Role of Reflective Practice

Becoming A Reflective Practitioner

According to the educator Professor David Boud, 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.

Kolb's Learning Cycle



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 practice educator. 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, ie. open-mindedness and motivation and also the skills ie. self-awareness; description and observation; critical analysis and problem-solving; and synthesis and evaluation (Richardson & Maltby, 1995).

REFLECTION ON PRACTICE

Time for Reflection

For guidance on keeping a reflective diary, please see below

Keeping a Reflective Diary & Reflective Questions.

Time For Reflection

You as a practice educator 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 visits to patients/clients 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 practice educator, thus demonstrating that learning is always ongoing!

Exercise;

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 it.

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 healthcare professional(purposes and intentions)?
- Why did I become a healthcare professional?
- What kind of healthcare professional/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 professional values and codes of conduct?

Exercise;

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 practice educator.

- 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 practice?
- 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?

REFLECTION ON PRACTICE

Time for Reflection

- 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?

Please see students' accounts of their experiences of keeping a reflective diary during practice placements in the Case Studies outlined below (Case Studies 1-3).

Case Study 1

I can remember sitting in my second year placement preparation classes, being advised of the benefits of keeping a reflective diary and thinking..."what a waste of time!". In fact, this was a very grave mistake; when will I learn that lecturers know what they are talking about?! I didn't use a reflective diary on either of my second year placements. At that time I thought the most important thing was to throw my all into seeing through my placement and not waste time on keeping a diary. It wasn't until my fourth year practice educator encouraged me to spend some time recording my thoughts at the end of the day that I realised what I had previously been missing out on.

If you are anything like me, with university work piling up, a part-time job, family commitments and an all-important social life, you may be thinking 'I don't have time'. In actual fact, making fifteen minutes available to note a few things that have happened throughout the day is very therapeutic. I found that taking a little time out every evening to complete my reflective diary helped me to get the day's events in perspective, to focus on any achievements or progress I had made that day and also things I had learned I would need to improve on. One method I found to be of great benefit was to make a special note at the end of each day's entry; this was usually something I felt I had done well, or a goal I hoped to achieve throughout the following

weeks. I found that using a reflective diary was an excellent way to clear my mind and ensure a positive, fresh start the following day. Make time- it's worth it!

Everyone feels under pressure at some point whilst on placement, especially if you are the only student at a placement centre. At the end of a stressful and demanding day it is a relief to be able to unload the burdens of the day on the pages of your reflective diary before they build up and become blown out of proportion. Often, when you come to look at the problems you have noted at a later date, they are not as bad as they seemed at the time, or you have found ways of overcoming these difficulties. I was on my own for both my second year placements and regret that I did not make use of a reflective diary at this time. They would have provided a release for pent up anxiety and stress, and perhaps improved my performance throughout placement.

What is often foremost in a student's mind during placement is the grade they will be awarded. However, when it comes to completing half-way and final reports, not everyone has the confidence to argue their own case in terms of their accomplishments and the marks they feel entitled to. I myself tended to be a quiet student, often unaware of my achievements and always lacking the confidence to express these in the hope of gaining recognition. This is where keeping a reflective diary was of greatest benefit to me; by noting my capabilities, strengths and daily accomplishments every day in my reflective diary I had the evidence I needed to chart a definite upward progression in skills throughout the placement. Although my practice educators never asked to see my reflective diary, I often took it to supervision and allowed them to read entries I thought to be important. By doing so, I not only boosted my own self-esteem and confidence, but I also provided my practice educator with evidence of my developing clinical reflection and skill acquisition.

PRACTICE EDUCATION

Time for Reflection

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 your 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'.

Case Study 2

I did not make use of reflective diaries during my 2nd year placements, and now as a 4th year student looking back, I can see how it would have been beneficial for me to have kept a reflective diary at that time. During my 4th year placements I kept a reflective diary and found it very useful at the time. It is also a useful resource that I will be able to look back upon in my future practice.

My practice educator at the time advised me to complete this diary, and gave me some basic ideas of the type of content to include in it. I used the reflective diary as a tool for recording the type of things I had done during that day. This included the type of patients I had seen and their conditions, and how these conditions presented. Also any assessments I may have seen being used that day, or may have carried out myself, or any treatment I may have carried out/observed, and also any administration and form completion that I may have done. Any visits carried out were also noted and other general notes and points to remember as well. Any particular feelings I may have had regarding activities throughout the day could also be noted.

I spent about 10-15 minutes at the end of each day completing my diary, and I drew up a simple outline on the computer which my practice educators kept as a template for future students. I used a text box with 'date' and 'what I saw today' as titles and used a page for each day.

I really would recommend keeping a reflective diary throughout placement as it helps you to focus your thoughts about the day and keep note of important things to remember. It is also a useful resource to look back on and remember;

- how different conditions presented in patients;
- how the OT process was carried out with these patients;
- how effective that process was;
- what needed to be improved and new/other perspectives on the situation.

Case Study 3

If I am being completely honest, I would have to admit that before I went on my first practice placement I could not see what the benefit of keeping a reflective diary would be. However, I did keep a diary from day one. The first couple of days were really reflections of how I was feeling, what I thought of the place, the people, etc. As time progressed I started to reflect more on practice – what had gone well and what had not. It is strange but when I started to write down what had happened each day I was able to analyse the events more clearly. I was able to pinpoint possible factors that had contributed to the outcomes in intervention that had been achieved. Some of the factors were that I was a novice others were that on occasions more preparation was required. One of the benefits of cataloguing events in the diary was that I could look back over the previous weeks and see how I had improved.

It is important to write up the diary everyday – it doesn't take long to do. Trying to document events that happened two or three days previously is difficult and important facets can be forgotten. Also make diary entries on placements that may not be going as smoothly as you had hoped for. It helps to make sense of where things may be going wrong.

REFLECTION ON PRACTICE

Time for Reflection

Keeping the diary is a useful tool for completing your end of placement evaluation. You can flick back through it and see what you have been doing over the weeks. It is then easy to transfer this information to the evaluation sheet. The diary is also useful when you come to fill in job application forms! Again you can scan the diary and select relevant information that can be matched with essential and desirable criteria in the job specification.

In conclusion, keep your reflective diary up to date. It is a valuable tool during placement and long after placements are completed.

Recording experiences in reflective diaries has been incorporated into many healthcare professional courses however it is important to note that while individuals can complete stages of their reflective process model on their own "there is a limit to what each of us can achieve unaided"(Boud, Keogh & Walker, 1985 p.36). Errington and Robertson (1998) emphasised the value of dialogue after studying how OT practice changed as a result of reflective practice in a group forum where practitioners were given the opportunity to articulate ideas.

Reflective practice could be implemented and encouraged in a group setting by practitioners and/or students. Alternatively it can be implemented within a one-to-one forum such as formal supervision. When thinking about the purpose of clinical supervision, it is clear that reflection and supervision are inextricably linked(Racey, 2005).

Creating A Reflective Context for the Learner

Reflection is an essential element of learning. For reflection to be used to advantage during practice placement, much will depend on the kind of experience that you as a practice educator have had in developing an understanding of and using reflective skills. Reflection is relatively new and many healthcare professionals have not yet been exposed to or had experience in reflection themselves. Guard against using the framework as if it were a set of instructions or a

checklist. There should be considerable space for discussion and all issues must be addressed in a constructive way. Bear in mind that there are many ways of developing reflection as a crucial skill for practice.

For further information concerning levels of reflecting and models of reflection refer to Alsop and Ryan (1996), *Making the Most of Fieldwork Education*, chapter 15.

The practice placement is the learning environment in which students from the healthcare professions realise their goals of integrating theory with the realities of practice and where they experience and absorb the contradictions and conflicts of professional practice. It should be within the context of the supervisory relationship that students are assisted to reflect upon and understand their experiences and where they are encouraged to face contradictions and inconsistencies within themselves and between themselves and other aspects of the practice environment. Therefore, the supervisory relationship is pivotal in assisting the emergent professional identity of the student/learner as a reflective practitioner.

Supervision

The relationship between the concepts of clinical supervision and reflective practice can be viewed in two ways. Firstly, clinical supervision can be seen as a legitimate tool in which practitioners engage in reflection. Alternatively, reflection can be seen as an essential component of supervision.

Students should be given feedback informally throughout the placement, preferably on a daily basis. Students should also have formal supervision once per week. This should be arranged at a specific time when the practice educator and the student have time and privacy to discuss the learning experiences of the previous week and decide on action plans for the following week.

REFLECTION ON PRACTICE

Pre-requisites for Effective Reflection and Supervision

Key stages of the reflective process

- an awareness of uncomfortable feelings and thoughts;
- critical analysis, including attending to feelings;
- development of a new perspective on the situation.

Pre-requisites for effective reflection and supervision

Pre-requisites for effective supervision and reflective practice include honesty and openness. Gillings (2000) states 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.

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 practice educator 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 practice educator are committed to the process and have a shared understanding of the process to make the experience effective.

Informal Feedback

Feedback, when given regularly and constructively, stimulates learning. It may be defined as a form of non-judgemental communication that can be both formal and informal (Henry, 1985). Informal discussions may take place at any time, sometimes several times a day. They are part of the general process of enabling students to integrate their educational needs with service delivery ensuring that they understand practice (Alsop and Ryan, 1996). These discussions usually take place before, during and/or after a treatment intervention with a client. Feedback usually takes place informally between sessions during refreshment breaks or while travelling between appointments.

Feedback should have the following characteristics:

- It should be sufficient.
- It should be specific.
- It should be timely.
- It should be regular.
- It should be encouraging.
- It should be relevant.
- It should be reciprocal.
- It should not be unexpected by students.
- It should include recommendations for improvement.
- It should be provided while the behaviour is still fresh in the student's memory.
- It should relate to behaviours that are remediable.
- It should deal with specific problems rather than generalisations.
- It should deal with decisions and actions rather than assumed intentions or interpretations.
- It should be based on information which is objective by first hand observation.

REFLECTION ON PRACTICE

Pre-requisites for Effective Reflection and Supervision

Formal Supervision

Formal supervision, by contrast, 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 essentially a time for exploring practice, a time for learning, where the real objective is facilitating the students' growth. Practice educators must therefore ensure that they acknowledge the importance of these sessions and allocate appropriate time for them.

Both the practice educator 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 practice educator may guide the discussion, prompting the student and probing his/her knowledge and understanding, but essentially the student must do the work. Please see the Reflecting on Practice Student Supervision Form provided within this resource as an example of a tool designed to assist students in developing reflective skills. The student should complete this form prior to the supervision session and it can serve as a stimulus for discussion within the session.

REFLECTING ON PRACTICE STUDENT SUPERVISION FORM

To Be Completed Weekly.

Date: _____ Student: _____

What has gone well?	What has not gone well?
What does the student see as his/her learning needs?	What does the practice educator see as the student's learning needs?
What has the student learnt from these experiences. What will be done differently?	What does the practice educator feel the student could have learnt? What could be done differently or improved?

See Appendix 1 for copy of form.

The following outline of the process of a formal supervision session summarises how learners should prepare for, participate in and learn from the supervision session.

REFLECTION ON PRACTICE

The Process of a Supervision Session

The Process of a Supervision Session

Prior to the supervision session the student/learner should:

- review his/her learning contract
- review the work undertaken to date
- identify and note his/her achievements during that week
- review the University's assessment form
- identify his/her further learning needs
- note any concerns he/she has and topics for discussion in supervision
- make an agenda.

During the supervision session the student/learner should:

- agree the agenda with the practice educator
- take initiative and participate equally in the discussion
- review his/her performance to date, expressing both strengths and limitations
- explore any issues that have given him/her special cause for concern
- specify particular learning needs which he/she has identified and prioritise them
- establish which needs might be met and how
- ensure that the learning contract is updated
- give his/her practice educator feedback on the strengths and limitations of feedback
- agree a course of action for the next few days
- clarify the practice educator's and his/her own responsibilities in the action plan

After the supervision session the student/learner should:

- review the session
- make summative notes of the session
- prepare to fulfil the action plan.

Supervision is a multi-faceted concept. It is an educational process which relies on effective relationships and open communication between the student and the practice educator. Good communication enables a student to feel comfortable about discussing strengths, limitations and

needs clearly and honestly with the practice educator. Open discussion allows a practice educator to gain an accurate assessment of the level of development at which the student is functioning.

Feedback, both informal and formal, from a practice educator is an essential feature of supervision but the student must also take responsibility for participating actively in the supervisory process and for monitoring his/her own performance in practice. Adopting a mentoring partnership can be an effective way of achieving this.

REFLECTION ON PRACTICE

Adopting a Mentoring Approach

Adopting a Mentoring Approach

The term mentoring/mentorship is interpreted in different ways across the healthcare professional groups, particularly with reference to nursing where the term mentorship refers to a very specific role but for the purposes of this project we are suggesting that practice educators may wish to adopt a mentoring approach with their students/learners rather than taking on the full role of being a mentor.

Mentoring can be characterised in numerous ways but two leading scholars on the subject, namely David Megginson and David Clutterbuck, (1997) have defined the concept as:

“Off-line help by one person to another in making significant transitions in knowledge, work or re-thinking” (1997 : 13)

The above definition raises some important issues about practice-based roles and the manner in which the transfer of skills and knowledge occurs between an experienced practitioner – the mentor, and a student – the learner.

Firstly, there is the issue of a mentorship being an “off-line” relationship. It is most effective that someone who is assuming a mentorship role not be the line manager of the individual they are mentoring, as the line association has the undeniable pressure for immediate results (Clutterbuck, 1998, Megginson & Clutterbuck, 1997). In contrast the mentoring relationship tends more towards giving time and space for taking a wider view of a situation where significant transitions are taking place. Mentoring is not about merely sponsoring another person’s career, but more explicitly focussed on a deeper learning or understanding of complex situations (Butterworth, 1998; Clutterbuck, 1998). In addition, issues of trust are paramount to the “development” of the learner and their acquisition of increased skills and knowledge; it is often difficult for an individual in a position of judgement, such as a practice educator, to build a necessary level of trust with the learner.

As part of the mentoring relationship, sessions or meetings occur which provide an explicit arena for the learner to articulate what has been occurring in both their professional and personal life (Clutterbuck, 1998; Megginson & Clutterbuck 1997). These discussions allow the learner to link actual experiences and the attainment of particular skills and/or knowledge. In doing this, the learner arguably becomes more acutely in tune with the inherent complexities of ‘real’ experiences and begins to perceive and understand situations with heightened awareness (Sayce et al, 2002).

There is much debate in the literature as to whether an effective mentoring relationship can exist when the mentor is in a position of authority over the mentee. Some theorists think that a practice educator may be able to adopt the mentoring role but if you feel that you can’t, you should identify a colleague within your practice setting who might undertake this role.

What is Mentoring?

“Mentoring is essentially about helping people to develop more effectively. It is a relationship designed to build confidence and help the learner take an increasing initiative for his/her own development”.

Manchester Metropolitan University

“Mentoring is a professional relationship within an organisation in which an experienced member of staff provides support and guidance to assist in the integration and career development of a new member of staff”.

University of Salford

Benefits of introducing a mentoring approach in practice education:

- reflective practice in the context of leading to action and development
- integration of learning into the work place
- support for mentees/learners in dealing with the pressures of work

REFLECTION ON PRACTICE

Adopting a Mentoring Approach

- encouragement with the course
- identification of common problems and successes
- individual ownership of the learning process is increased

Adopting a mentoring approach with a learner or a student during practice placement provides the following benefits for the mentee and the mentor.

Benefits to the mentee:

- practical application of knowledge
- development of operational skills
- personal development in terms of greater confidence and inter-personal skills
- intellectual development through the sharpening of analytical abilities
- gaining insight into own performance (and the adequacy thereof)
- overcomes isolation/insularity
- personal support mechanism
- provides a second opinion
- develops networks
- advice and encouragement
- exchange of ideas, focus attention on how ideas agree and differ
- provides self-confidence in professional approach
- opportunity to analyse learning outcomes
- professional development
- helps newcomers settle in more quickly
- helps to reflect and examine the principles informing practice
- learning to cope with the formal and informal structure of the organisation
- career advice and advancement
- watching and learning from the strategies of others
- learning to take calculated risks
- solving and learning from problems (rather than causing concern)
- handling people

Benefits to the mentor:

- makes it necessary to question what we are doing
- can learn from mentees
- challenging relationship
- encourages reflective practice
- adds to own personal and professional judgement
- aid to other aspects of job eg appraisal skills
- involvement with new courses
- positive effects of being involved in the professional development of colleagues
- opportunity to discuss professional issues that wouldn't otherwise have found the time to air
- additional insights into the processes of teaching and learning (because seen from a different viewpoint)
- opportunity to examine the basis of own knowledge
- a fresh perspective on ideas for current and future projects
- enhances organisational reputation
- improved job satisfaction
- increased peer recognition
- increased understanding of learning needs
- turning mistakes to profit
- expansion of networks

The role of the mentor

There are two distinct roles that mentors play; one in relation to career functions and the other more concerned with the needs, thoughts and feelings of the individual mentee. It would be almost impossible for any one person to have the ideal personality to fulfil all the roles that a mentor may be required to perform, or indeed to possess the vast range of skills that could be attributed to the perfect mentor. The aim of this checklist is to show some of the roles that mentors have taken on in similar mentoring programmes. Above all the mentor should be flexible and responsive to the needs of the mentee.

REFLECTION ON PRACTICE

Adopting a Mentoring Approach

The role of the mentor might include undertaking the following roles and tasks:

- **An advisor:** offering support and guidance
- **Providing an objective viewpoint,** a stable point of reference
- **An observer:** of treatment sessions, preparation etc
- **A sounding board:** someone to bounce new ideas around with and to generate new ideas
- **Providing an opportunity to reflect**
- **A counsellor:** a sympathetic, non judgemental ear
- **A problem solver:** to discuss and consider problems
- **A questioner:** someone who will challenge ideas
- **A supporter:** providing encouragement, reassurance, motivation and building confidence
- **Providing feedback**
- **A coach**
- **A good listener**
- **A helper in setting standards**
- **A task setter**
- **An information source/resource**
- **A networker, friend and ally.**

REFLECTION ON PRACTICE

Tensions and Anxieties in Practice Placement Learning for Students & Practice Educators

Tensions and Anxieties in Practice Placement Learning for Students & Practice Educators

Practice placements are generally very enjoyable aspects of the educational programme for the majority of students and their practice educators. However it must be acknowledged that during the periods of practice based learning the students often experience anxiety-provoking situations and this is sometimes also the case for the practice educators (when dealing with the failing student). Although anxiety may be a positive factor that enhances performance, too much anxiety can inhibit student learning and supervisor effectiveness.

Student anxieties are centred around fitting into a new unknown environment, getting on with the practice educator, adapting to the as yet undefined new role, taking responsibility for patient/client progress, coping with the feeling of being constantly observed and of course passing the assessment.

Practice educators can help students deal with the anxieties of the practice environment by:

- supporting students through the different stages of the practice placement;
- providing a supportive learning environment;
- encouraging students to use more effective coping behaviour;
- role modelling appropriate professional behaviour;
- providing clear and realistic expectations;
- giving honest feedback which provides clear guidelines for improved performance; and
- using learning contracts.

Quality supervision is a balance between support for the student in the new environment and new role, and appropriate challenge.

A positive student-practice educator relationship is one that is:

- open;
- caring;
- mutually meets each other's needs;
- honest;
- tolerant; and
- respectful of each other.

Dealing with Negative Feedback

Some students who are with practice educators who constantly criticise them, are unapproachable and unsupportive, feel afraid and tense. The student's performance continues to decline in this environment. These students are unable to ask for the assistance they so desperately need and are in constant fear of making mistakes.

Some ideas for how practice educators should deal with problems once they have been identified:

- create an accepting environment in which learning can take place;
- communicate any problems about the student's knowledge base, skills, attitudes or behaviours as soon as they are identified;
- document feedback and give the student a copy;
- share your concern with the student and the university tutor;
- establish measurable objectives for change that are explicit, overt and observable; and
- remember no matter how appropriate the supervision, there are some students who need more time to develop competency.

REFLECTION ON PRACTICE

Appendix 1

Reflection on Practice: Student Supervision Form

To Be Completed Weekly.

Date: _____ Student: _____

What has gone well?	What has not gone well?
What does the student see as his/her learning needs?	What does the practice educator see as the student's learning needs?
What has the student learnt from these experiences. What will be done differently?	What does the practice educator feel the student could have learnt? What could be done differently or improved?

REFLECTION ON PRACTICE

Appendix 2

Supervision Session; Action Plan

Action Agreed - Practice Educator;

Action Agreed - Student;

Signed.....

Date.....

Signed.....

Date.....

REFLECTION ON PRACTICE

References

REFERENCES

- Alsop A & Ryan S (1996) Making the most of fieldwork education: A practical approach. Stanley Thornes, Cheltenham.
- Baumgartner LM (2001) An update on transformational learning. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*. No89:15-22. Jossey-Bass, San Francisco.
- Boud D, Keogh R & Walker D (1985) Reflection: turning experience into learning. Kogan Page, London.
- Boyd E & Fales A (1983) reflective learning: the key to learning from experience. *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, 23 (2): 99-117
- Butterworth, T., Faugier, J., and Burnard, P., (eds) (1998) *Clinical Supervision and Mentorship in Nursing* (2nd ed). Stanley Thornes, Cheltenham
- Clutterbuck, D. (1998) *Learning Alliances: Tapping into Talent*. Institute of Personnel and Development, London.
- Daloz LA (1999) *Mentor: Guiding the journey of adult learners*. Jossey-Bass, San Francisco.
- Daloz LA (2000) Transformative learning for the common good. Cited in Chapter 4 Mezirow J and associates(eds) *Learning as transformation: Critical perspectives on a theory in progress*. Jossey-Bass, San Francisco.
- Department of Health (1993), *A Vision for the future: the nursing midwifery and health visiting contribution to health and healthcare*. HMSO, London.
- Errington E & Robertson L (1998) Promoting staff development in Occupational Therapy. *British Journal of Occupational Therapy* 61(11), 497-503.
- Gillings B (2000) Clinical supervision in reflective practice cited in Burns S & Bulman C, *Reflective practice in nursing*. Blackwell Science, Oxford.
- Jarvis P (1992) Reflective practice and nursing. *Nurse Education Today*, 12, 174-181.
- Johns C & Freshwater D (1998) *Transforming nursing through reflective practice*. Blackwell Science, London.
- Johns C (2000) *Becoming a reflective practitioner*. Blackwell Science, Oxford.
- Kolb DA (1984) *experiential learning: Experience as the source of learning and development*. Prentice Hall, New Jersey.
- Megginson, D., Clutterbuck, D. (eds) (1997). *Mentoring in Action: A Practical Guide for Managers*. Kogan Page, London.
- Racey A (2005) Using reflective practice as a learning tool in clinical supervision. *Therapy Weekly* April 14
- Reid B (1993) 'But We're Doing it Already!' Exploring a Response to the Concept of Reflective Practice in Order to Improve its Facilitation, *Nurse Education Today*, 13: 305-309.
- Richardson G & Maltby H (1995) reflection on practice: enhancing student learning. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*. 22:235-242.
- Sayce, S., Lewis, A., Swann, P., & Squib, B., (2002) *Work Based Learning for the Built Environment: A Literature Review*.
- Schon D (1983) *The Reflective Practitioner*. Basic Books, London.

REFLECTION ON PRACTICE

References

Tryssenaar J (1999) Interactive journals: an educational strategy to promote reflection. *American Journal of Occupational Therapy* 49 (7), 695-702.

Zubizarreta J (1999) Teaching portfolios: an effective strategy for faculty development in occupational therapy. *American Journal of Occupational Therapy* 53(1), 51-55.

USEFUL TEXTS

Boud D. Keogh R. Walker D. (1985) *Reflection: Turning experience into learning*. Kogan Page, London.

Ghaye T & Lillyman S (1997) *Learning Journals & Critical Incidents: Reflective practice for Healthcare professionals*, Mark Allen, Salisbury..

Ghaye T & Lillyman S (2000) *Reflection: Principles and Practice for Healthcare Professionals*. Quay Books, Dinton.

Jasper M (2003) *beginning Reflective Practice*. Nelson Thornes, Cheltenham.

Moon J (1999) *Reflection in Learning & Professional Development*. Kogan Page, London.

Moon J (1999) *learning Journals: A Handbook for Academics, Students and Professional Development*. Kogan Page, London.

Redmond B (2004) *reflection in Action: Developing reflective practice in health and social care services*. Ashgate Publications, Aldershot.

Rolfe G Freshwater D Jasper M (2001) *Critical Reflection for Nursing and the Helping Professions: a user's guide*. Palgrave Macmillan, London.

Schon D (1983) *The Reflective Practitioner*. Basic Books, New York.

PROJECT AIMS

The Project aims to make practitioners more effective at supporting & supervising students in the workplace across a range of healthcare disciplines.

The professions involved in the project are:

- Dietetics
- Nursing
- Occupational Therapy
- Physiotherapy
- Radiography

The principal questions to be addressed in this project are:

- What constitutes effective practice in placement education?
- How can effective practice be implemented at organisational, professional and practitioner levels so as to maximise student learning on placement?
- How can this good practice be developed and embedded in the contexts of health and social care within a multicultural workforce?

Project Administrator

Telephone: 028 90 368 458

www.practicebasedlearning.org

