

Reflective Writing

Dr Bojan Koltaj

Learning Developer

Faculty of Medicine, Health, and Social Care

Learner@Canterbury.ac.uk





Session aims

To discuss reflective writing:

its purpose and form

how to go about it

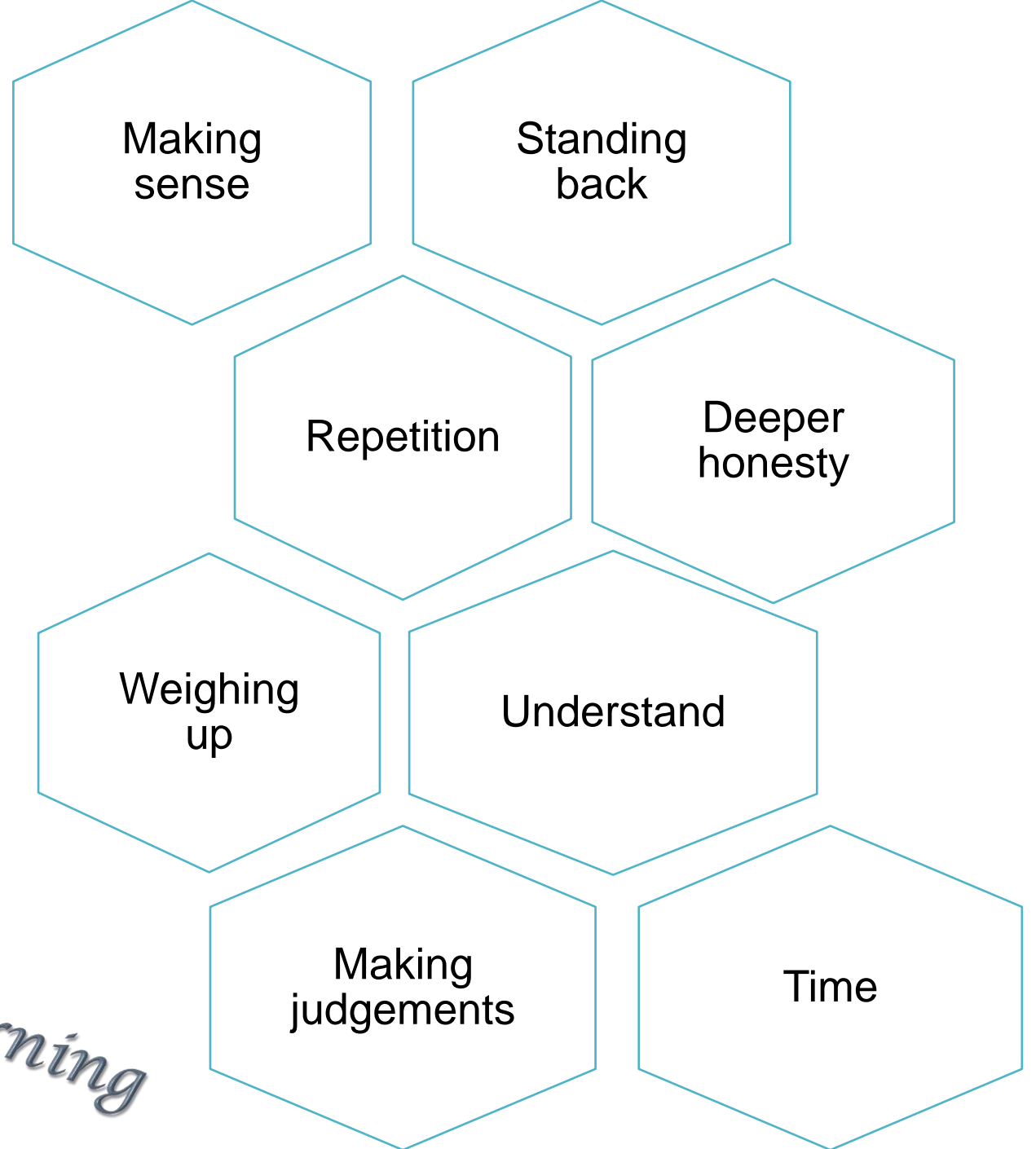
the value of reflective cycles

reflecting critically

What is reflection?

A mental process related to thinking and learning. We use it in practice to improve understanding and includes elements such as:

Intrinsically motivated learning



Why reflect?

“The trouble with Nursing and Midwifery [clinical practice], as with life generally, is that it is dynamic, constantly changing, challenging, frustrating and exciting often all at the same time”

(Bulman & Schutz , 2004)

The Professional Imperative

9.2. gather and **reflect** on
feedback from a variety of
sources, using it to improve your
practice and performance
(NMC Code, 2018)

Thinking about what you have observed or experienced

Considering what you did well, what could be better next time

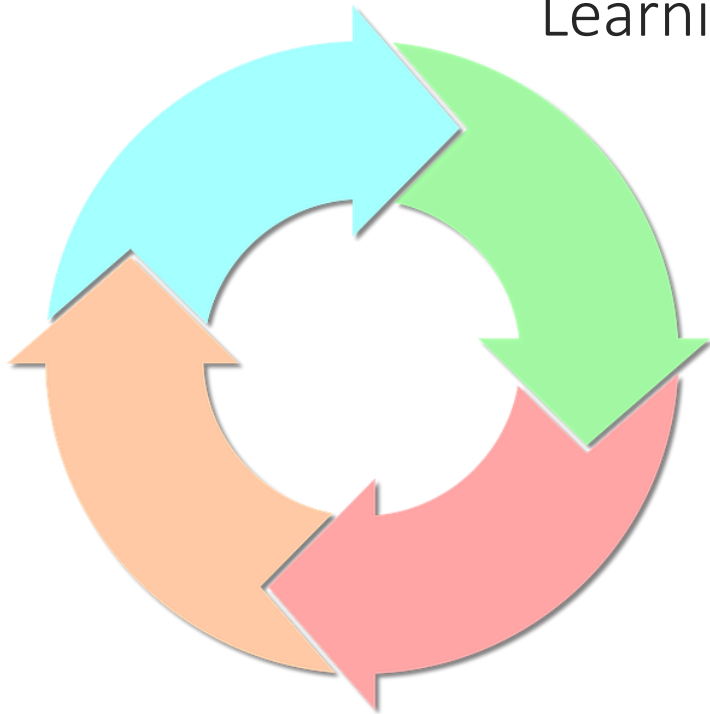
Thinking about effects of our actions – on self, on others...

Learning from experience

Exploring further development

Improve your approach for future

A CYCLE!



Reflective practitioner

“ An individual who examines past, present and future learning, achievements and aspirations in order to identify areas of development”

Moon, J. (2002) *Reflection in Learning and Professional Development*



Reflective writing in essence...

to think deeply and critically about a particular learning experience

-> examine you experience

-> write about how you have changed, developed or grown

CRITICAL & ANALYTICAL

personal BUT aimed at engaging the reader or target audience

-> with the help of a reflective cycle?

MODELS OF REFLECTION

Schon (1987) Reflection on Action, Reflection in Action

Gibbs (1988) The Reflective Cycle

Johns (2018) Structured Reflection

Borton (1970) Reflective Model

Stephenson (1994) Reflective Framework

Take care!

Advantages

Offer a *structure* to be followed

Provide a useful *starting point* for those unsure where to begin

Allow you to *assess* all levels of a situation

You will know when the process is *complete*

Disadvantages

Imply that steps *must* be followed in a defined way

In the *real world* you may not start at the 'beginning'

Models may *not apply* in every situation

Reflective practice is a *continuous process*

SOME TIPS

Reflective cf Academic Writing

REFLECTIVE WRITING

- Based on your own **experiences**
- Includes your **own view**
- Written in **1st person**

ACADEMIC WRITING

- Based on the **literature** you've read
- Compares the **views of others**
- Written in **3rd person**

BOTH:

Written in a formal writing style!

Practical tips before you write

➤ **Keep a study / work journal!**

daily or weekly entries of your course or practice

OR

➤ **A Log book!**

noting down actions of what you have done to keep record. This can be used at a later date to reflect on groups of actions



Practical tips for writing



- ❖ How to begin? Just start writing!

Don't think too much about how to start your first sentence or paragraph



- ❖ Write using the first-person narrative

Tone: personal and reflective of your character

- ❖ Think about your vocabulary
- ❖ Be honest!
- ❖ Highlight your turning point - "Aha!" moment
Strengthens your point



Asking yourself lots of questions is key!

- What have you learned about yourself as a result of the experience?
- Have you developed as a ... because of it? How?
- Did it have any positive or negative bearing on your life?
- Looking back, what would you have done differently?
- Why do you think you made the particular choices that you did? Do you think these were the right choices?
- What are your thoughts on the experience in general? Was it a useful learning experience? What specific skills or perspectives did you acquire as a result?



Vocabulary top tips

The benefits

- ✓ This situation allowed/enabled me to
 - explore my approach to...
 - reflect on my...
- ✓ Reflecting upon the incident...
- ✓ Reflection has provided me with the opportunity to...

Opinions and goals

- ✓ Articulating/revising/re-evaluating my opinions gave me the opportunity to
 - examine/explore ...
 - enhance my practice/ability by...
 - develop/work towards/re-evaluate my goals...
 - function autonomously/as an individual...
 - become an active/independent learner...

Knowledge and skills

- ✓ Considering the situation from different perspectives allowed me to/provided me with...
- ✓ This provided/equipped me with a new way of approaching...
- ✓ I have begun to
 - recognise my strengths as well as my weaknesses
- ✓ I now feel more confident about
 - integrating new ideas with present knowledge
- ✓ I can now
 - value my past experience

Professional development

- ✓ It led me to question...
- ✓ It helped me to
 - gain a sense of ownership of my professional development
 - extend/enhance/develop my professional knowledge
 - develop/enhance my self-awareness/self-esteem
 - increase my confidence...
 - interact with/and gain insights from my peers/colleagues

And remember:



Make a habit of it!

Reflecting critically by linking/applying:

theory/guidelines/articles

to

practice!

... with reference to literature/guidelines!

Demonstrate:

Analysis and validation

you have read widely

gained nuanced insight into the topic

considered the broader implications of the literature for your CPD



Multi-dimensional nature of learning & problem-solving!

Critical paraphrasing



Rembrandt et al. (2015) evaluate the role of nursing in educating women about Intimate Partner Violence and recourse choices as crucial.

How do we turn this into a critical paraphrase?

The insight gained on placement/during observation **reflects/agrees with** the evaluation of Rembrandt *et al.* (2015) that the role of nursing in educating women about Intimate Partner Violence and recourse choices is crucial.

While the nurse can indeed represent most immediate and long-term response to ... (Rembrandt *et al.*, 2015), it **invites further reflection** upon the training on this specific need.

While Rembrandt *et al.* (2015) **correctly** evaluate the role of nursing in educating women about Intimate Partner Violence and recourse choices as crucial, they **do not offer** any clarification as to their distinctive role in the wider HPT/ they **do not specify** the conditions...

The **generalisation** that most public health nurses are ill-equipped to educate women on this delicate matter (Koltaj, 2015) **fails to consider** the developed guidelines and indeed legislature on..., such as the XXX Act (NHS, 2021). As this analysis has shown, ...

Use the language of critique & evaluation!

ADDRESS THE KEY ASSESSMENT CRITERIA



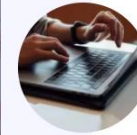
Keep it top of mind when you're writing!

Think of it as a checklist – and confirm you have ticked off everything in the list before you can submit!

STAY FOCUSED!

Learning Skills Hub.

The hub has been developed by Learning Developers and Learning & Research Librarians with your needs in mind.



Your Learning Skills Team

[Email us](#)

Learning & Research Librarians and Learning Developers

Take things further...

[Introduction to Reflection](#)
[on the](#)
[Learning Skills Hub](#)

Further Reading

Bolton, G.; Delderfield R., (2018) *Reflective Practice: Writing and Professional Development*. London: SAGE.

Jasper M. (2007) *Professional Development, Reflection and Decision –Making*. Singapore: Blackwell Publishing.

Rolfe, G., Freshwater, D., Jasper, M. (2001). *Critical Reflection in Nursing and the Helping Professions: a User's Guide*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Schön, D A: (1987), *Educating the Reflective Practitioner: Toward a New Design for Teaching and Learning in the Professions*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.