# **NARRATIVE ON WEBINAR – REFLECTIVE PRACTICE (P. Clegg, 2021)**

We are discussing reflective practice in the context of this course in order to enrich our professional practice. Here, we will use reflective practice as a response to learning. Here is a simple definition of Reflection:

*‘Learning through and from experiences, towards gaining new insights of self and practice.’* (Finlay, 2008)

Reflection is a cyclical process, used in order to take professional responsibility for constantly improving the quality of our own practice and to consider the impact of our practice on those in our care and their families.

We constantly and mostly unconsciously reflect. We reformulate our lives based on reflective practice, whether we are aware of it or not. All the major decisions and life’s milestones are subject to some level of reflection. Reflection becomes a way of life!

According to Donald Schon (1983), there are two types of reflection:

* Reflection of Life and
* Reflection for life.

Reflection of life is not always positive, depending on our demeanour or personality. If we are a ‘glass half empty’ type of personality, then reflection of life will look back at all the factors that negatively affected us (often unfairly); however, reflection for life is positive and looks forward to what we can do to improve our lot.

If we don’t reflect, we stand still and become stale. As professionals working with children and young adults, we want to provide the best care possible for those we support in the school setting. Reflective practice is the practice of thinking about and analysing our practice, with the aim of challenging, changing, modifying, developing and improving it. This should be a continuous cycle.

We reflect on our lives, our practice, our relationships, our impact on others, our emotional responses. Now, we will look at some models of Reflective Practice:

* Taggart and Wilson, 2005 – Models of reflective Thinking
* Rolfe, Freshwater & Jasper; The WHAT Model (2001)

A reflective practitioner takes a balanced view, recognises and celebrates their own strengths, while acknowledging what could be improved. Here are two reasons to adopt reflective practice:

1. Reflect on learning in order to gain a better experience
2. Reflect on professional practice in order to become even more professional.

Reflective practice involves looking at our experiences, connecting with our feelings and attending to our theories in everyday use. It entails building new understandings to inform our actions in the situation that is unfolding.

For the purpose of this course, we are asking you to make reflective practice a habit. It will enrich your learning experience and enable you to become truly professional in your role. We want you to share your thoughts and ideas with your fellow-students.

Here are some suggested questions to help you to get started:

* What is happening?
* Why am I reacting in this way?
* How can I reword instructions?
* Why did things happen that way?
* What were my intentions when I did that?
* What triggered such a response from me?
* What would I do the same or differently if I could repeat that session?
* What root cause might be prompting or perpetuating this student’s behaviour?
* What do I believe about how students learn?
* How does this belief influence my instruction?
* Is this the most efficient way to accomplish this task?
* Where did I succeed as an SNA in the past?
* What can I do to make my supporting role more fun, while adding to my students’ learning and enjoyment?
* What can I do to be more proactive in my professional development?
* What do I need to resolve in order to move forward more optimistically and with a fresh mind?

WHO? WHAT? WHERE? We reflect on others and on ourselves, places, circumstances, emotional responses and outcomes. We do this through Observing, Thinking, Planning, Reading, Evaluating and Changing.

Keeping a reflective journal is a great way to start; you will be surprised at how this focusses your thinking. Write narratively, tell a story, describe an event. Narrative has been described as an attempt to create order and security out of a chaotic world.

Some tips for writing your Critical reflections for the weekly Tutor Discussion Forum:

* Do not reproduce the content of the session
* Write about what you found interesting
* What do you remember most clearly from the session?
* Has my perspective changed?
* Try to balance the positive with the negative
* Have you found the answer to a burning question?

Write in an informal way. Express your thoughts. Focus on strategic, controversial or engaging pieces of information. Keep your posts short – long posts can be intimidating for other students!