

A Guide to Reflection

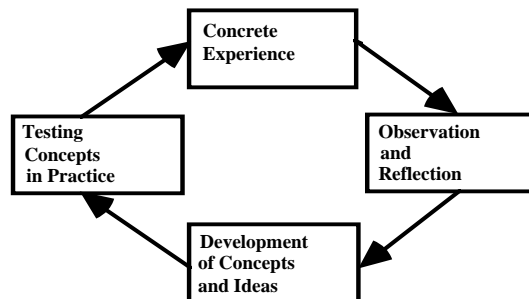
Reflection is used as a learning tool to make sense of what you have experienced and how you can optimise your learning from the experience.

Reflection offers the opportunity to;

- view our own thoughts, feelings and behaviours,
- build a picture of who we are,
- make sense of what we see, do and feel,
- work through feelings and beliefs,
- see the impact of, and attempt to integrate the experiences of the past, present and future,
- see patterns in thoughts, feelings and behaviours, and
- map progress and development.

Reflection is an important stage or process of the learning cycle. The diagram below displays how we have a concrete experience which we will learn most from by observing and reflecting on it prior to developing concepts and ideas which we then test out in practice.

The Kolb Learning Cycle



Trigger Questions For Reflection

- What was the concrete experience?
- How would you describe your behaviours?
- How were these behaviours similar/different to your normal ways of behaving?
- What thoughts did you have before, during and after the experience?
- What feelings did you experience before, during and after the experience?
- What do you think triggered your thoughts, feelings and behaviours?
- In what other situations have you acted like this?
- How do you think others may have perceived your reactions?
- What management competencies do you believe you displayed?
- How might you do things differently if you could repeat the experience?
- What was easy for you?
- What did you find difficult?
- How would you describe your interactions with other people involved?
- Are you experiencing any confusion as a result of the experience?
- What have you learned about yourself as a result of the experience?
- What have you learnt about others as a result of your experience?
- What overall learning have you gained from the experience?
- What future development needs have you identified as a result of the experience?
- How might you now act differently as a result of the experience?

Reflecting on experience: What happened?

- Where was I, what was the situation or context?
- What did I do?
- What was the outcome?
- How did other people respond to my behaviour?
- What were my goals or objectives in this situation?
- How happy am I with the outcome?
- How would I like it to have been different?
- How did my behaviour help me achieve my goals? How did it get in the way of achieving my goals?
- What might I need to do differently to create a different outcome?
- What was I feeling?
- What was I thinking?
- How did my thoughts and feelings affect my behaviour?
- What stopped me from behaving the way I would like to?

Developing concepts and ideas: What does my experience mean?

- What does theory, or my studies, tell me that may give me new perspectives, new ideas on how to deal with this sort of situation in future?
- What can I learn from colleagues or friends that may give me new ideas?

Applying concepts in practice: How will I use my learning?

- What is my plan for next time I find myself in a similar situation?

Some Reflection Guidelines

In your reflection, you may care to do some of the following:

- Try to identify what has been going on...
- Try to reach some conclusions about yourself and the situation...
- Identify events that triggered an emotional reaction - how did you feel? Why?
- Note issues that aroused your interest or curiosity. What puzzled you, annoyed you, amused you?
- Try to increase spontaneous responses.
- Highlight supportive evidence...
- Comment on what you might do differently next time...
- Analyse personal dynamics.
- Try to identify any assumptions you may have made before the exercise, and how these might have changed...
- Identify key insights gained and comment on them.
- Comment on unexplained outcomes and changes in behaviour in attitude (yourself and others).
- Highlight any unresolved issues...