

Health & Social Care Professions Interprofessional Conference: Building a Culture of Reflective Practice

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CHALTON@UCC.IE



Outline of Presentation

Contextualising Reflection

Conceptualising Reflection: What is Reflection ?

Models of Reflection

Case Study: Social Workers views on the challenges and opportunities of engaging in reflection?



Knowledge in Professional Practice

What does it mean to '**know**' as a professional practitioner?

What defines '**knowing**' in your professional domain ?

Who decides what constitutes legitimate knowledge in professional practice?



REFLECTION

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What do we mean by reflection?

Reflection/ Reflective Inquiry in Professional Education

According to Rath (2007) reflection poses epistemological challenges in educational and professional spheres

“Reflective practices challenge students [professionals] to reframe traditional epistemologies that privilege objectivity, cognition and certainty into a situated knowing that is generated out of inquiry, observation and documentation processes.” (Rath, 2007).

Reflection & Reflective Practice

Reflection and Reflective Practice have been popularised by writers like Dewey, J (1933); Schon, D (1983; 1987)

Different Emphases of Reflection

John Dewey (1933) regards reflection as a **mode of thinking**.

Donald Schon (1983 and 1987) regards reflection as **a way of knowing in action**.

Definition of Reflection: A Mode of Thinking.

John Dewey defines reflective thinking as:

“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 conclusions to which it tends, constitutes reflective thought.”

(Dewey, J. How We Think 1933:9)



Phases of Reflection

For Dewey reflection involves two phases:

1. A state of doubt, hesitation, perplexity and mental difficulty in which thinking originates, and
2. An act of searching hunting and inquiring to find material that will resolve doubt settle and dispose of uncertainty.

(Dewey, J. How We Think 1933:12)



Reflection : A Way of Knowing in Action (Schön, 1987)

Schön (1987) emphasizes **the centrality of the professional** and of **professional experience** in informing the construction and reconstruction of knowledge for application in professional practice.

Reflection: Challenges Technical Rationality

Schon criticises the:

*“ dominant view of professional knowledge as the application of scientific theory and technique to the instrumental problems of practice.”
(1987:30)*

“Practitioners are instrumental problem solvers, who select technical means best suited to particular purposes . Rigorous professional practitioners solve ..instrumental problems by applying theory and technique derived from systematic preferably scientific knowledge.”

(Schon,1987 3-4)

Attitudes of Mind for required for Reflection (Dewey:1933)

Open-mindedness

Whole- heartedness

Responsibility

Reflection is a systematic evidence based process that leads to action

According to Schon(1987) reflective engagement involves **persistent and careful consideration of practice** in the light of **knowledge and beliefs** (old and new), and it **always leads to some action /outcome**.

Summary: Reflection

Reflection is:

A Process of Inquiry

It places the learner /professional practitioner at the centre of the learning cycle

It necessitates certain attitudes of mind on the part of the reflector i.e. openness wholeheartedness and responsibility

It involves making the reflective process public i.e. in writing (reflective journaling) , peer groups , conversations, supervision

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Models of Reflection

Various Models of Reflection

Kolb (1987)

Siedel (1996)

Gibbs (1988)

Using the Kolb Cycle to facilitate reflective inquiry.

According to Kolb the learner / practitioner is positioned at the centre of the learning process. They must be encouraged and helped **to reflect**.

Reflective Process: Kolb Cycle



Reflection: Steve Siedel

Reflection involves the Reflector in 4 Stage Process:

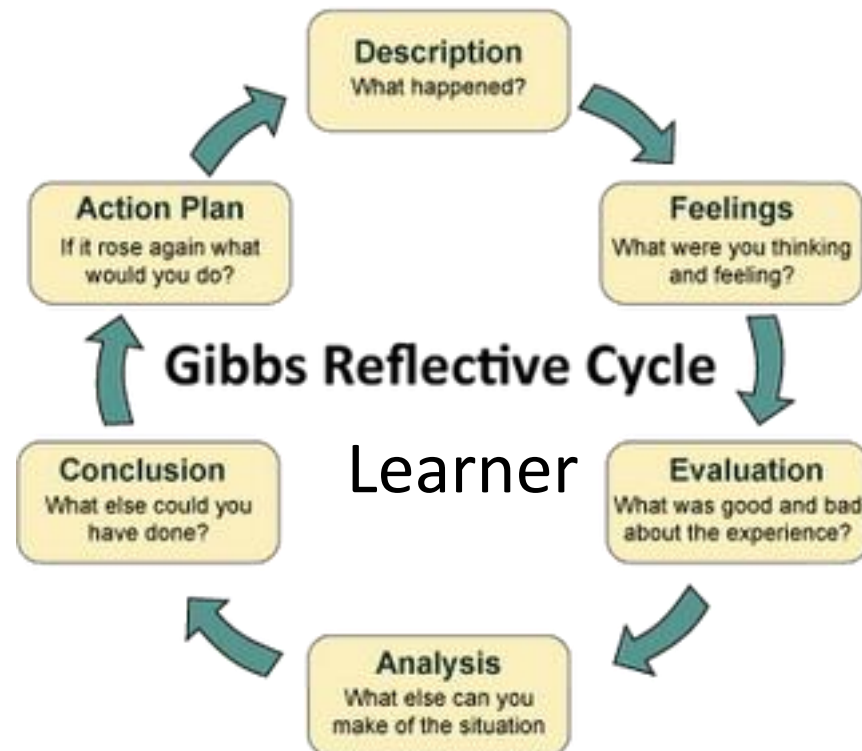
Looking Back: [Describe the experience]

Looking In: [What is significant of this experience personally and professionally?]

Looking Out: [Where/to whom might you go to develop/expand your thinking and understanding of the meaning/significance of this experience?]

Looking Forward: [Having completed this exercise, what have you learned about reflection?]

Model of Reflection: How can we engage in the Reflective Process



REFLECTION REFLECTION

**Research on Reflection: Social
Workers Experiences of Reflection**

Research on Reflection with Social Work Practitioners (2016/2017)

Halton, C (2017) *“Learning from social work graduates of an MA/Postgraduate Diploma program in social work field education: What do social work practitioners learn on the program? How do they apply that knowledge to their social work practice?”* in ‘Learning Over Time: How Professionals Learn, Know and Use Knowledge, Case 3. NAIRTL (on line) Publication. (October 2017)

Halton, C. & Lyons, N. (2016) 'Reflective Inquiry in Social Work Education: Outcomes of a short term study of graduates of a postgraduate programme in practice teaching and supervision'. *The Irish Social Worker*, Winter 2016 (Winter 2016):49-57.

Halton, C., & Dempsey, M. (2016) 'Construction of peer support groups in child protection social work: Negotiating practicalities to enhance the professional self'. *Journal of Social Work Practice*, .

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Social Workers Experiences of Reflection

*“Reflective inquiry is about the management of **uncertainty my uncertainty**... it is very difficult to define reflective inquiry... for me it is about asking questions: what I did? Why I did it? How did it make me feel? How did others feel? What wider issues were at play? What worked well and less well? What was my key learning? What is my outstanding learning need? How would I revisit things differently next time?” (MHSW)*

Social Workers Experiences of Reflection: A Process of Looking in and Looking Out on practice

*“My understanding of reflective inquiry related to how I both deconstruct and inquire into what has happened in practice, while also helping me understand the bigger picture, so in a sense both **zooming in on my practice and zooming out on my practice all at once**, to allow me see other perspectives.” (CPSW)*

Social Workers Experiences of Reflection : Standing Back

*“In terms of the meaning I attribute to reflection, I feel that it relates to both **pulling me back from what has happened, so that I am scrutinizing my own subjectivity**, sometimes with the help of another person (my supervisor), so that I can see my own blind spots, while also looking at me [personally] and my own impact on what I am doing, taking into account all the other factors at play, like power and organizational demands and agendas” (MHSW)*

Social Workers Experiences of Reflection : Client Centred

*“For me, being reflective is about ensuring **the client does not get lost** and ensuring that I am not so caught up in the chaos that I miss the bigger picture, which ultimately may be to the detriment of the client.” (CPSW)*

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Outcomes of engaging in reflection

Outcomes of Engaging in a Reflective Process: Self Awareness

*“I think that is what it [reflection] brought to me, when I am more aware of myself it fine tunes my awareness. I think that is what I find **that having that space** allows me ...see more clearly so that picture isn't that fuzzy, because I think that that's the danger for me, **when I'm in that space, the clients anxiety and stress ...is having an impact on me.**”*
(CPSW)



Outcomes of Engaging in a Reflective Process: : Space & Time

“Reflection is “***the space and the time that I can give to*** me and thinking about the things that are impacting on my life and the things that need to do something about. Whether its about ***personal or work related issues.***” (SWHW)



REFLECTION

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Tools of Reflection :Writing

Reflective Learning Tools: Learning Journal /Research Diary

*“Both the **reflective diary** and the **learning journal** were terrific tools that we could use on a day to day basis to support reflective inquiry.” (CPSW)*

*“It also **forced me to read** as its something I do not do enough of. ..I feel I am just too tired when I go home I had to **force myself to read books and journal articles** and that was good and challenging. I learned an awful lot from the reading.” (SWHW)*



Reflective Learning Tools: Writing Process Learning Journal \Research Diary

*“ I found that the reflection in the research diary, summarising the articles that I read and the books, I found that to be very helpful for myself... I find that when I write reports and when I write letters I come to understand situations better**I really understand things clearer through the writing process.**” (MHSW)*

*“Initially when I was writing the journal I had to work on not just producing a summary of the article . **I was prompted to engage more critically in the writing and to pose my own questions of the literature** and that helped me to put out there what I was getting from the articles.” (CPSW)*



Reflective Learning Tools: Peer Groups

“Excellent forum in terms of support and learning.”

“Very good at looking at work through the critical eye of peers but in a supportive forum.”



REFLECTION REFLECTION

**Challenges of Engaging in Reflection:
Cultures of Organisations & Practice**

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Professional
Cultures



Challenges of Engaging in Reflection: Cultures of Organizations & Practice

Multi-tasking

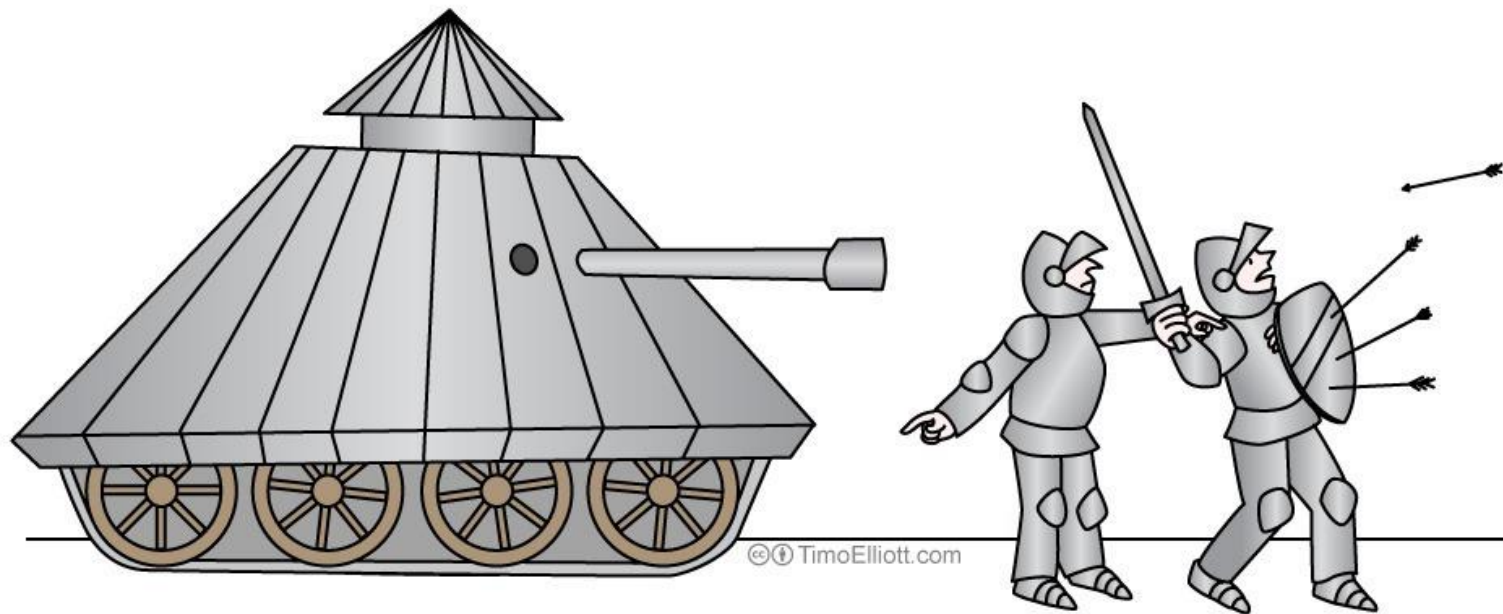


Challenges of Engaging in Reflection: Cultures of Organizations & Practice

Space and Opportunity



Challenges of Engaging in Reflection: Cultures of Organizations & Practice



“What new innovation? Can’t you see I’m too busy?!”

Challenges of Engaging in a Reflective Process (CPD)

1. Time
2. Space
3. Opportunity
4. Motivation
5. Organisational and Professional Cultures of Practice

REFLECTION REFLECTION

Learning Outcomes of Reflective Engagement

Learning Outcome: Professional Regeneration

*I think that I am certainly **more self aware**. I ask more questions about my practice and myself. **I seek out support** to be sure that I get what I need, in order to ensure the client remains the centre of my focus. I'm not afraid to challenge the status quo, because I have a **better understanding of what is going on on a broader level**. In fact I think **it has energised me**"(CPSW)*

*"I have pulled something from different readings and from them I have tested it out and practiced. I suppose I have become more aware **and I am testing out the new ideas** more and more."*(CPSW)

Learning Outcome: Professional Regeneration

*“Its that you become **conscious of the knowledge you use** in your work, you can become so used to working a particular way, it can become so engrained in what you do that you don’t think about it anymore you just carry on.” (SWHW)*

Learning Outcomes: Developing a Sense of Confidence/Agency

*“I’m not afraid to stand my ground. **I am teasing out questions in supervision** that arise in practice without hesitation, because reflection allows you and encourages you to inquire and do that. When you have the opportunity to do that, **you have more conviction and confidence in what you do and why you’re doing it** and I can see evidence of this in my practice.” (CPSW)*

“It [reflection] reduced the sense of isolation and aloneness one can feel as a practice teacher and social worker.”



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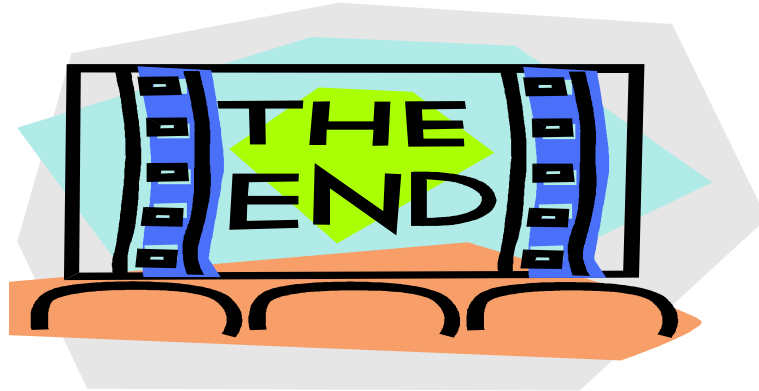
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THANK YOU
ANY QUESTIONS
CHALTON@UCC.IE