

The use of reflection in medical education: AMEE Guide no 44

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Appendix 1

Example of an information sheet for undergraduate and postgraduate medical students

(after Moon 2004)

WHAT IS A REFLECTIVE LEARNER?

Reflective learners continually reflect on:

- What they are learning and how they are learning it
- What their strengths and weaknesses in learning are
- The gaps in their knowledge and skills, and how they might work towards filling these.
- How they can develop and improve their learning

WHY IS REFLECTION IMPORTANT?

- Thinking about your learning and writing things down helps to clarify your thoughts and emotions.
- Reflection helps you to focus on your development as an effective independent learner, and on the strategies you use to work towards this.
- Reflection helps you to identify your learning needs and how you can meet these needs

- Your notes will become a record of your progress throughout your study. Reflection is a way of learning, not a method of assessment.

HOW CAN I DEVELOP AS A REFLECTIVE LEARNER?

Create a learning journal (or portfolio).

It is important to regularly identify and record your experiences and reflections. You may find that this is easier if you make an entry into a notebook as soon as possible after an experience whilst the associated thoughts and feelings are fresh in your mind. However, it is essential that these notes are revisited at a later date so that further reflection can occur. Most people find that a regular habit of recording and reflecting can be easily developed.

What to write in your learning journal

Your learning journal should not be just a description of the topics and activities covered during your sessions, although you may wish to include some brief background to put your reflections into context.

The core of your learning journal should be your thoughts and feelings about your learning. Try to get into the habit of reflecting on your learning in all of your course. You can write in your learning journal, anything that helps you to reflect on your learning.

Here are some examples of the sorts of things you may wish to write about:

- Your feelings about the course and your progress
- Your feelings about the lecturers and the other students
- Changes in your motivation or attitude towards your learning

- Your ideas about how you learn most effectively

- The things that challenge you. What you find difficultand why

- The things you find easy and why

- Your ideas for how you can tackle tasks such as writing essays and exams.

- Try to make constructive use of feedback on your work. Make sure that you understand what lecturers or other students are saying, and be prepared to ask them if anything is unclear.

- What you think that you are good at knowing (knowledge) or doing (skills)..... and why

- What knowledge do you need to improve and what skills do you need to develop?

- How are you going to improve your knowledge and develop your skills?

- What help do you need to improve your knowledge and develop your skills?
Where are you going to get this help from?

Example of a simple and entertaining approach to reflection for continuing medical education: PUNs and DENs (after Eve 1994)

- The PUNs and DENs approach is a learner and patient –centred approach to reflective learning.
- The first step is to identify the PUN (Patient's Unmet Need). After each consultation, the doctor asks whether they have met their patient's needs. For example, the patient may need better control of their asthma.
- The second step is to define the DEN (Doctor's Educational Need). By identifying the PUN, the doctor can define their educational need. For example, further knowledge of the use of long acting beta-agonists may be required.
- The next steps require the DEN to be met, such as by reading an article, and using the new knowledge or skill to the clinical context.

The great value of this approach is that it is driven by the needs of patients and it can be applied to the vast range of problems that arise during daily professional practice. Eve (1994) states that at least ten PUNs should be collected in a week of encounters and that any less should prompt the learner to look harder!

Example of a template for structured reflection to develop a therapeutic relationship of professional practice (after Johns 1995)

1. Description: What happened?

Recall the experience as soon after the event as possible, and write down a description of what happened.

2. Feelings: What were you thinking and feeling?

How aware of the experience were you?

What were you thinking?

What assumptions did you make and how valid were they?

What were you feeling?

What were your own attitudes and feelings in this situation?

What aspects of your own behaviour were you aware of?

3. Evaluation: What was good and bad about the experience?

What is your interpretation of this situation at present?

Include justifications for your interpretations, for example, what factors/ knowledge are influencing your judgement?

Did you recognise these as forming a pattern or echoing previous experience?

4. Analysis: What sense can you make of the situation?

Re-evaluate the experience by comparing what you know and feel already about this situation with other possible related causes.

5. Conclusion: What else could you have done?

How do I feel about this experience now?

How could I have dealt better with this situation?

What would have been the consequences of these other choices?

6. **Action Plan:** If it arose again what would you do?

What have I learned from the experience?

How would I ensure my practice was going to change for the better, in a similar situation?

Example of questions to develop deeper reflection

Questions to facilitate reflection

- What is the nature of the significance of this issue to you and why?
- How do you feel about it?
- Why does this issue make you feel the way that you do?
- What are the implications of the way that you feel?
- What do you need to do?
- What other information do you need (ideas, knowledge, opinion etc)?

Questions that are likely to be helpful in prompting more profound reflection

- Are others seeing this issue from different points of view that may be helpful to you to explore?
- Does this issue relate to other contexts (such as family or past experiences)?
- If you 'step back' from this issue, does it look different?
- Do you notice that your feelings about it have changed over time – or in the course of writing this – suggesting that your own way of looking at it has changed?
- Are there ethical / moral / wider social issues that you would want to explore?