

Reflective Learning

DR. ANOOPA.K.R

- **Reflective learning** is a way of allowing students to step back from their **learning** experience to help them develop critical thinking skills and improve on future performance by analysing their experience.

- Reflective learning enables you
- to accept responsibility for your own personal growth
- to see a clear link between the effort you put into your development activity and the benefits you get out of it
- to help see more value in each learning experience, by knowing why you're doing it and what's in it for you
- learn how to 'learn' and add new skills over time.

- Reflection should become a routine part of working life that is more or less instinctive. If you see learning as an intrinsic part of your job, you don't have to interrupt your work to do it. People who routinely plan, record and reflect on their learning tend to see more opportunities for personal development. It's a matter of capturing the moment. The fact is, the world becomes a richer, more stimulating place when you embrace reflective learning, because you switch on a kind of intuitive radar that's tuned to pick up useful opportunities.

- **Learning Logs**

- A simple but effective way of getting to grips with the idea of reflection is to set 10 minutes aside each week to write a Learning Log - every Friday afternoon, for example. A learning log is a bit like a diary or portfolio, but it has set headings that encourage you to record key events/experiences since the last log, your reactions to them, and then reflect on them to draw out conclusions about what happened and determine any subsequent actions you should take.

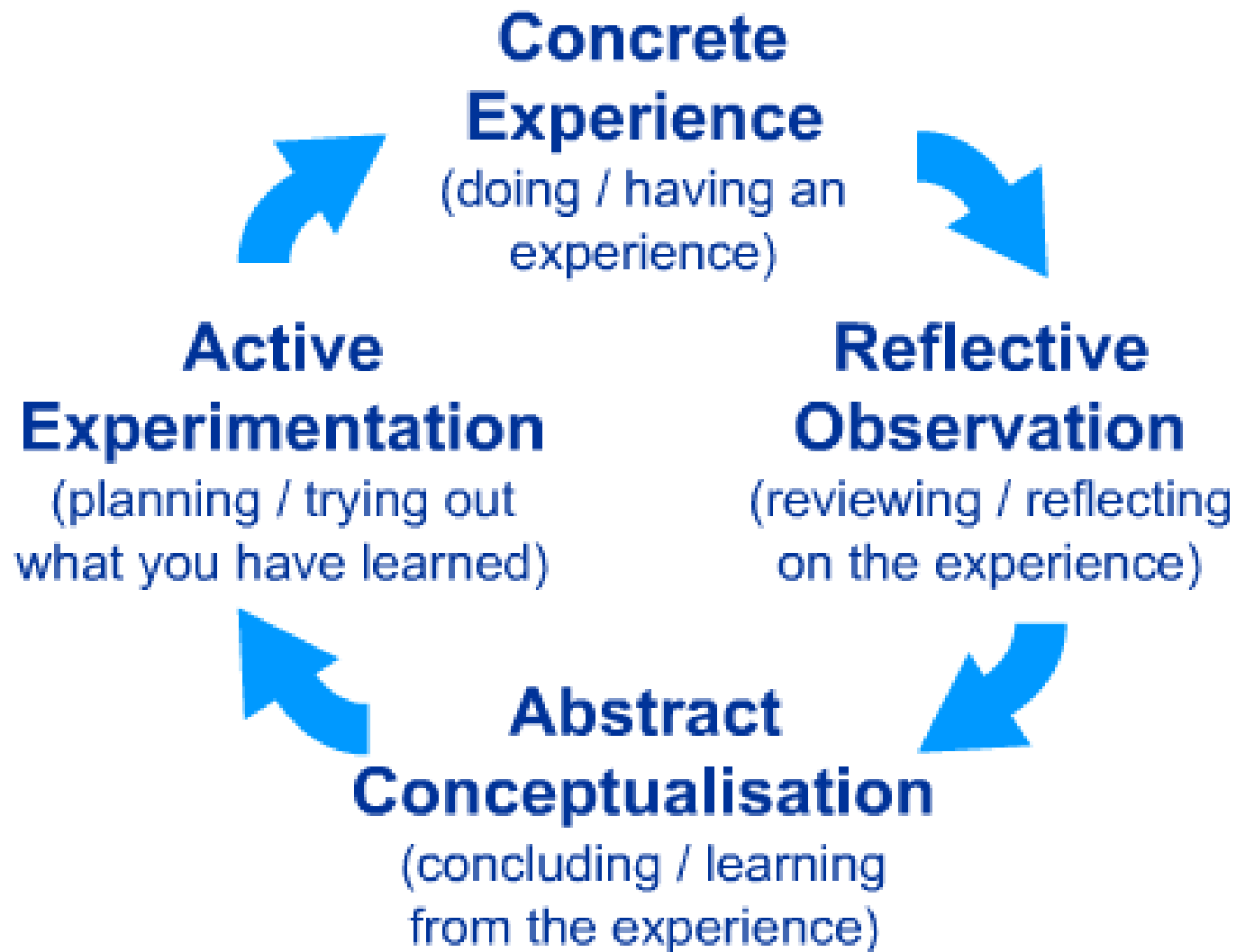
- Here are four things to record in a simple Learning Log :

- the experience/situation/event
- your initial reactions to it
- what you did
- what you learned from the experience/situation/event

- **Tips for using Learning Logs**

- Make sure you keep your learning logs in a file or folder, so you can reflect on them again at a later stage. Reflection is better if it is a cumulative process.
- They may be very useful when compiling a Personal Development Plan or C.V., preparing for an interview, or for informing future assessment strategies based on your performance so far.
- Your perspectives change over time. What is really interesting is to go back and look at your observations once the dust has settled. You may identify patterns of thinking or behaviour, or come to different conclusions with the benefit of hindsight.
- **Discuss!**

- **Reflective Writing** “*Reflective Writing. Guidance Notes for Students*” **Pete Watton, Jane Collings, Jenny Moon.** (April 2001)
- Reflective writing is a means of turning 'surface' learning into 'deep' learning. In brief, reflective writing:
 - is not JUST a descriptive account of the event – it shows some analysis
 - explores motives, including the views and motives of others, and considers them against the author’s own
 - explores how reactions relate to behaviour
 - questions ideas, considers them in depth
 - includes other (potentially critical) perspectives as well as your own: it requires you to ‘stand back’ from the event
 - mentions external information and how it impacted on behaviour
 - doesn’t make one point at a time, but links ideas together
 - recognises that the personal frame of reference can change according to the emotional state in which it is written, the acquisition of new information, the review of ideas and the effect of time passing

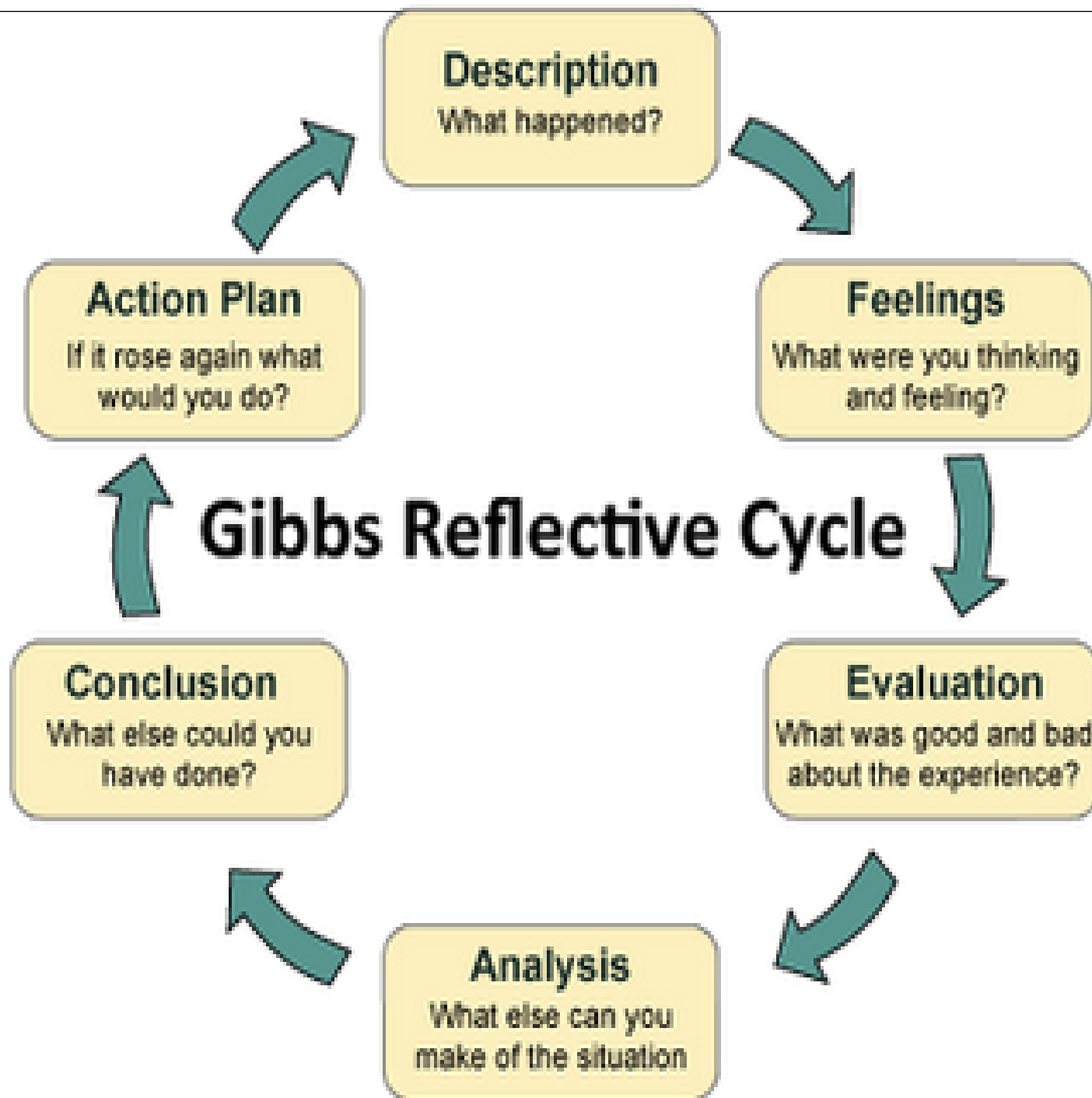


- the ability to **look back** over an **experience** and break it down into its significant aspects, such as any factors affecting success or failure
- a means of **learning** by making links between **theory** and **practice** (or learning and action)
- a means of **improving performance**, by using the **outcome** of reflection to inform **future practice**
- a way of recognising, and **maximising** the personal value of, a learning experience
- a way of turning **surface learning** into **deep learning**

Benefits of reflective learning

- Reflective learning enables learners to activate prior knowledge, and to construct, deconstruct and reconstruct their knowledge. In doing so, several benefits accrue, including:
 - Learning from experience
 - Developing meta-cognitive skills
 - Developing the skills of professional practice
 - Exercising responsibility for their own learning (and actions)
 - Building capacity to restructure / reframe knowledge
 - Continual improvements in practice

- Schon (1983) and Kolb (1984) are two leading theorists on reflection. Schon defined reflective practice as two capabilities
- reflecting in action whilst doing something, and
- reflecting on action (after an action has been done).



Advantages

- There are several advantages to reflective learning, which include:
- accepting responsibility for your learning and, as a result, for your personal growth
- becoming **metacognitive**, or literally, learning how to learn
- becoming aware of your motives with your actions
- seeing a link between the work you are putting into learning and what you are getting out of it

Reflective Learning Theories

- Reflective Learning Theories
- There are several prominent people who have developed their own theories on reflective learning, but we will touch on three theorists who are, perhaps, the best known among reflective practitioners.
- 1. John Dewey: Dewey is a famous name in education, and Dewey believed that reflection was a necessary precursor for action. In other words, Dewey advocated that students really think and mull over what they had read and encountered, and after doing this, they could apply that knowledge much better.
- 2. Donald Schon: Schon studied Dewey and his theories very carefully, and he believed in two types of reflection:
 - **reflection-on-action**, which is an unconscious event that deals with the knowledge we use to solve problems and carry out actions
 - **reflection-in-action**, which occurs as the action is happening. In other words, you reflect on what you're doing while you're doing it.
- 3. David Kolb: Kolb developed an entire learning cycle, which includes elements of feeling, watching, thinking, and doing. While in this cycle, the learner is actively observing, conceptualizing, experimenting, and finally, experiencing. Kolb felt that moving through the different steps in this cycle was very important to being a reflective learner.

Conditions for reflection

- You should be thinking about possible subjects and opportunities for reflective writing before and **during** your placements, not only after them.
- Some conditions which can assist you to learn through reflection include:
- **Preparation** – when you enter into a new experience, try to identify opportunities for reflection.
- **Understanding** – you need to know what the goals and expectations of critical reflection are.
- **Time** to stop and think.
- A level of **objectivity** about yourself and the impact of your actions.
- **Honesty**.
- An open, **non-defensive** attitude to the experience.
- A focus on the **deeper levels of meaning** – moral, ethical, social and/or professional issues (Branch & Paranjape, 2002) in addition to your emotional response.
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Conditions inhibiting reflection

- In the workplace, lack of time frequently limits opportunities for learning through reflection. People may not have time to stop and think. Similarly, time is an issue for students.
- For students, perhaps the major obstacle to learning through reflection is devoting insufficient time to it, and consequently failing to explore the experience in depth. Students sometimes write simply to meet the assessment requirements, without genuinely engaging in the process.
- This will not lead to meaningful insights or positive change.

Conditions inhibiting reflection



Assignment

- Use Reflective learning steps to analyse your experience at mental health center

	Thoughts	Feelings	Actions
Pre			
During			
Post			