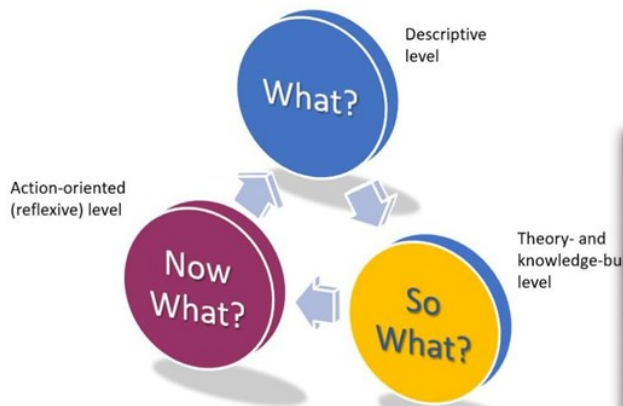


Levels of reflection

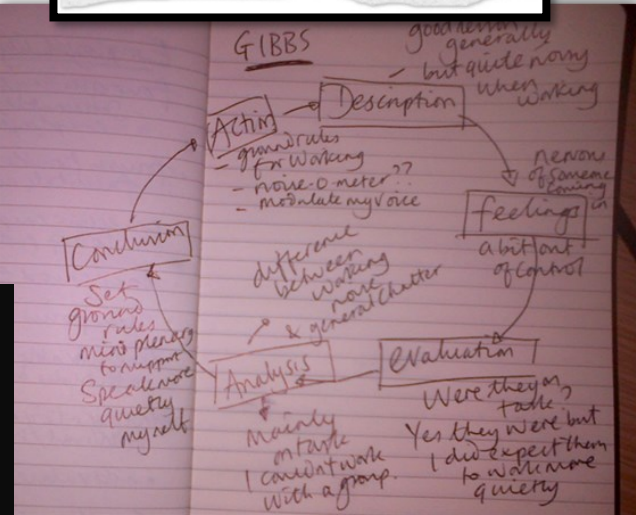


We do not learn from experience... we learn from reflecting on experience.

- John Dewey

Learning without reflection is a waste.
Reflection without learning is dangerous.

-Confucius



REFLECTION just doing it

EXPECTATIONS & GUIDANCE

PGCE Primary 2022-23



Introduction

This introduction should do two different jobs

- 1) To provide an overview of what reflection is, why it is important for you as a developing practitioner, to present a model you could use and some worked examples to help you get started.
- 2) To provide an overview of our expectations of you in your progress as a reflective, effective practitioner and how you demonstrate your thinking development.

What is reflection

'Reflection is very broadly able to be defined as the deliberate, purposeful, metacognitive thinking and/or action in which educators engage in order to improve their professional practice' (Sellars 2013: 2).

Notice from the above quotation that reflection is a deliberate and purposeful process that is also about thinking and action. At its highest level it is also metacognitive, where you understand and challenge your thinking about teaching. This transforms practice.

Gadsby (2022: 358), cites Farrell (2013) who argues that a simple analysis of practice rarely leads to improvement of practice as it lacks structure. So, we are suggesting that as you routinely reflect, think and wrestle with the many grey areas of teaching, you use a reflective model to provide that structure. The reflective model we suggest here is Rolfe's (2001) Reflective model. It is based upon three questions: What, So what, Now what.

These are developed in this document

<https://my.cumbria.ac.uk/media/MyCumbria/Documents/ReflectiveModelRolfe.pdf>

Below are a couple of worked examples for you, to show how this model can be used to develop thinking and practice. The first is from observation of practice and the second reflection on practice

What	<i>The problem/difficulty / challenge / experience?</i> A Geography lesson I observed in my year 4 class. It was quite different to what we have been taught in Uni. The children were all on task, but I was thinking about our Geography input and what I saw just did not make sense.
So what Questions? Literature? Implications for practice? Is there a bigger picture?	<i>What does this tell me about learning and teaching?</i> Reflecting back, there were no Geographical concepts taught, there was some useful vocabulary about rivers and mountains, we were looking at key aspects of physical geography. The activity was a reading comprehension cloze procedure and it did not feel like Geography, it felt more like an English lesson. Did the children make progress in their geographical knowledge or skills learning? I'm not sure.
Now what	<i>What do I need to do to improve my teaching?</i> <i>What are some of the big ideas here?</i> The main big idea here is that if I am teaching a Geography lesson, the children should be developing Geographical skills, knowledge and understanding and my activities should enable that. I have seen here that it is really easy to create or use a planned activity from a scheme without any thought as to what specific curriculum skills, knowledge and understanding it develops. This links to my own learning about a well-planned curriculum and how when planning lessons I need to consider progression of skills and knowledge within each subject area. This reflection has sharpened my thinking about planning sequences of learning.

So, you can see from the above short reflection, the student has moved on in their thinking and practice. This arose from something that puzzled them. Instead of ignoring it or just accepting it, they challenged it and developed as a result.

The second worked example below is reflection on a piece of teaching.

What	<i>The problem/difficulty / challenge / experience? How did you feel?</i> I was teaching a maths lesson (Yr 2). It was all going well, children settled and equipment out for my main input. I had brought whiteboards and pens to the front for them to use and asked them to get them and pass them round and it was mayhem. It took 20 minutes to settle them back down. I felt out of control, my class teacher looked annoyed and I was embarrassed.
So what Questions? Literature? Implications for practice? Is there a bigger picture?	<i>What does this tell me about learning and teaching?</i> Reflecting back, asking the children to help themselves to whiteboards and pens was a mistake. This was the cause of the mayhem and whilst initially I blamed the children, it was my lack of thinking and planning for organisation of resources that lost 20 minutes learning and caused problems for the rest of the lesson. Perhaps they should have had them before coming to the carpet – could I have put one in each child's place at their tables and they bring them?
Now what	<i>What do I need to do to improve my teaching?</i> <i>What are some of the big ideas here?</i> The main big idea here is that planning, organisation, behaviour and learning are inextricably linked. Thinking through resource management is crucial to progress in learning as it minimises disruption and chaos in the classroom. I think on my lesson plans I will make sure that I have thought this through. The main thing though is this shift in my thinking about the connectedness of planning, resource management, behaviour and learning.

In terms of reflection, without the use of this type of model, many teachers stop at the 'so what' as the problem is then solved. But this student has developed their thinking and understanding to a greater depth and as a result their practice is undergoing a transformation.

What do we expect from you?

- You will need a notebook or something electronic to record your reflections.
- It should become a routine part of your weekly learning journey to becoming a qualified teacher. Engage in a piece of reflection every week. Use the Rolfe model to start with or choose another model to structure your thinking. This does not include assessed school placement, where you will use your SPAR's weekly review form.
- Your tutor(s) will guide you with a question or area, you should focus on an element of your centre-based curriculum and/or school practice.
- Bring your reflections / notebook to sessions. You may well have an activity to do in a session, you may be asked to share your developing thinking
- This is a professional course and as such there are professional expectations. Engaging fully with course requirements, such as this reflective work, is also part of our Student Code of Conduct – linked in the programme handbook. Reflection is all part of being a professional, so make sure you get the most from it.

During the first two phases of the programme – beginning and developing, we ask you, except during assessed placement periods, to reflect weekly on your learning. Use a structure, such as the What, So what, Now what framework as illustrated earlier in this document or another model to develop your thinking. Your tutors will guide you through their sessions during each week and may well set you a reflective question. The remainder of this booklet provides questions for you linked to each phase of learning. Following this, I have included work by Gore and Zeichner (1991), who provide some questions to help take your thinking deeper.

Beginning Phase Reflection Starters

These starter questions to help focus your reflections against your curriculum and learning are structured around the domains of learning as identified in the ITT Core Content Framework and SPAR.

These starters are taken from the Beginning Placement SPAR. They may be used as part of reflection conversations with your mentors as part of professional learning. They can be used by your tutors in sessions and/or by yourself to think about and discuss drawing on your school experience. These are just starting points, so do not just limit your reflections to these.

Domain	Possible reflection starters
Professional Behaviours	What can you see are the key professional behaviours in this setting/context? What impact does this have on children's learning?
Managing Behaviour	What does acceptable behaviour look like? What impact does behaviour have on the pupil's ability to learn?
Challenging Disadvantage	How have you reflected on the vision, values and aims of the school/setting? How have you observed these being exemplified in day-to-day learning?
Curriculum	How are resources used to align with the school's curriculum? Through core and foundation subjects, is there opportunity for pupils to learn and master essential concepts, knowledge, skills and principles of the subject?
Pedagogy	Are you working in a positive environment where making mistakes and learning from them is part of the daily culture? What is the impact on learning?
Assessment	Does the formative feedback and marking in your class help move the children on in their learning? Is children's progress recorded? How is the data used?

Post Placement Reflection

After your beginning placement, take some time to reflect on something that happened on placement – e.g., an activity, a lesson, an ‘incident’, behaviour, resource use or organisation. Use this four step proforma, adapted from Gadsby (2022: 366).

Focus of reflection:	
Step 1: Deconstruct the issue/ incident. This is a description of the incident and your initial observations of practice. How did you feel?	
Step 2: Reflections from reading and any discussions. Identify areas to research and possible authors to engage with	
Step 3: Reconstruct the incident based on what you have learnt from reading and discussion. Critically engage with the ideas and question the reading in light of your context	
Step 4: What are the key priority areas to transform practice? What are the conceptual ideas?	

Developing Phase Reflection Starters

These starter questions to help focus your reflections against your curriculum and learning are structured around the domains of learning as identified in the ITT Core Content Framework and SPAR.

These starters are taken from your Developing Placement SPAR. They may be used as part of reflection conversations with your mentors as part of professional learning. They can be used by your tutors in sessions and/or by yourself to think about and discuss drawing on your school experience. These are just starting points, so do not just limit your reflections to these.

Domain	Possible reflection starters
Professional Behaviours	Reflect upon your willingness and ability to seek support and communicate effectively with other colleagues, including engaging in professional dialogue?
Managing Behaviour	How do learners' behaviours and their involvement and engagement with learning link? Is your developing placement classroom climate effective for learning? What makes it so? Why is it not?
Challenging Disadvantage	To what extent may diverse backgrounds and influences have an impact on learning? In your class, what are the main differences in the rates of progress and attainment of pupils experiencing challenging circumstances?
Curriculum	Reflect on the subjects you have seen and taught, • How well are possible misconceptions identified and planned to prevent these forming • How is lesson pace and timing managed effectively, how do you/your teacher, intervene effectively and change direction and shift in emphasis to support learning? • How well are innovative learning activities used, that interest and challenge pupils' learning and put this into the context of the real world?
Pedagogy	Does your planning provide continuity and progression across a unit, topic or even key stage(s) building on pupils' prior knowledge and attainment?
Assessment	Reflect on the approach to feedback in your classroom. Is it timely? Oral and written? Does it motivate and reinforce learning and help pupils to set targets to improve?

Post Placement Reflection

After your developing placement, take some time to reflect on something that happened on placement – e.g., an activity, a lesson, an ‘incident’, behaviour, resource use or organisation. Use this four step proforma, adapted from Gadsby (2022: 366).

Focus of reflection:		
	Step 1: Deconstruct the issue/ incident. This is a description of the incident and your initial observations of practice. How did you feel?	
	Step 2: Reflections from reading and any discussions. Identify areas to research and possible authors to engage with	
	Step 3: Reconstruct the incident based on what you have learnt from reading and discussion. Critically engage with the ideas and question the reading in light of your context	
	Step 4: What are the key priority areas to transform practice? What are the conceptual ideas?	

Going deeper

You may wish to go a bit deeper with your reflections. These questions, adapted from Gore and Zeichner's (1991) four types of reflection provide some really provoking opportunities to develop thinking.

Academic reflection

- Do I know my content really well?
- Am I using appropriate pedagogical strategies for my children's needs?
- Am I well-organised and resourced in readiness to teach?
- Have I sequenced the content suitably for my children's needs and the defining characteristics of my discipline?
- Have I utilised relevant assessment strategies to evaluate student learning?
- Have I been innovative in order to engage and sustain students' interest?

Social efficacy reflection

- Am I implementing what I know from research about teaching this content?
- Have I considered any differences in the context and participants used in the research and my cohort and circumstances? Is this evidence-based practice meeting the needs of the children in my class?

Developmental reflection

- Am I providing teaching and learning contexts, tasks and instruction that are suitable and appropriate for the age and stage of my children from a developmental perspective?
- Have I evaluated my children's skills and thinking to determine the stages at which each of them is able to engage in different learning contexts?
- Have I planned suitable instructional and task modifications to accommodate the differences in the students' thinking, emotional and physical capacities?
- Have I designed teaching and learning activities that are interesting for diverse groups of students?
- Have I taken into account and effectively utilised students' various interests to design lessons and curriculum?

Social reconstructionist (critical) reflection:

- Do I have specific philosophical beliefs or viewpoints about the values, purposes and functions of education?
- Have I considered who determines the curriculum that is designed to meet the nominated purpose of education?
- Have I considered in what ways the curriculum supports or neglects the learning needs of students from different social, cultural and individual groups?
- How can I mitigate any shortcomings in the system to provide more equitable education for all my students?
- Have I analysed compulsory tests or assessment items to identify bias or prejudice and taken appropriate measures to overcome or to diminish the impact of these where possible?

References

- Farrell, T. (2013). Critical incident analysis through narrative reflective practice: A case study. *Iranian Journal of Language Teaching Research*. 1 (1). Pp: 79-89. Available at: <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1127432.pdf>
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