

DEAL: A 3-Step Model for REFLECTION

Developed by Patti Clayton, Ph.D., North Carolina State University

NOTE: Don't begin a reflection activity by asking "What did you learn?" The purpose of reflection is to GENERATE learning. "What did you learn?" is a good FINAL step for reflection, but not the first step!

NOTE: Reflection is NOT the same as DESCRIPTION although description is a good FIRST step in reflection.

STEP ONE: DESCRIBE (in fair detail and as objectively as possible) ... the experience, the activity, the video, the lecture, the reading, etc.

STEP TWO: EXAMINE the experience discussed above in light of the content studied in this course. Choose a particular theoretical construct to examine in more detail in light of your past, present or future practice activities. Consider your gut level feelings, your values and your basic knowledge as you further explicate the concept and what it means for you.

STEP THREE: ARTICULATE LEARNING from the two steps above. Answer the four questions below:

What did I learn (about myself as a social worker or about clients, colleagues, communities, agencies, etc.)?

How did I learn it?

Why is this learning important for me as a developing social worker?

What will I do in my future practice, in light of this learning?

Make sure that you use your best critical thinking skills considering issues like relevance, accuracy, clarity, depth, breadth, logic and significance. (See back page).

Model modified for social work by Lisa E. McGuire, IU School of Social Work

Critical Thinking Standard	Description	Questions to check you critical thinking skills
Relevance	Are all of my statements relevant to the question at hand? Does what I'm saying connect to my central point?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How does this relate to the issue being discussed? - How does this help me deal with the issue being discussed?
Accuracy	Are all of my statements and all of my information factually correct and/or supported with evidence?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How do I know this? - Is this true? - How could I check on this to validate?
Clarity	Do I expand on ideas, express ideas in another way, and provide examples or illustrations where appropriate?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Did I give an example - Is it clear what I mean by this? - Could I elaborate further?
Depth	Do I explain the reasons behind my conclusions, anticipate and answers the questions that my reasoning raises, and/or acknowledge the complexity of the issue?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Why is this so? - What are some of the complexities here? - What would it take for this to happen?
Breadth	Am I considering alternative points of view? Have I thought about how someone else might have interpreted the situation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Would this look the same from the perspective of my client? Someone else? - Is there another way to interpret this?
Logic	Does my line of reasoning make sense? Do my conclusions follow from the facts and/or my earlier statements?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Does what I said at the beginning fit with what I concluded at the end? - Do my conclusions match the evidence I have presented?
Significance	Do my conclusions or goals represent a major issues raised by my reflection on experience?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Is this the most important issue to focus on? - Is this the most significant problem to consider?

Modified source: Paulk, R. & Elder, L. (2001). *The miniature guide to critical thinking*. The Foundation for Critical Thinking, Santa Rosa, CA.

Evaluation of the Use of Reflection Papers in Social Work Education: Social Work Students Speak

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Research Question

- How do reflection papers facilitate student learning of knowledge, values, and skills for social work practice?
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Literature Review

- Adult education (Dewey, 1910; Freire, 1972)
 - Role of reflection in experiential learning (Kolb, 1984; Schon, 1987)
 - Writing in higher education (Fink, 2003; Boud, 2001; Brockbank & McGill, 1988; McKeachie, 1999)
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Sample

- Thirteen focus group participants (12 female, 1 male) were recruited from graduate students in the Indiana University BSW and MSW programs
 - Participants had used reflection papers in at least one course
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Methodology

- ❑ Grounded theory (reciprocal inductive-deductive approach for data collection & analysis) (Glaser & Strauss, 1967)
 - ❑ Authors began with personal reflection of use of reflection papers in social work courses
 - ❑ Literature was researched for relative theory
 - ❑ Focus groups (Krueger & Casey, 2000) examined students' experiences
 - ❑ Transcripts of focus groups were analyzed for themes (Patton, 2001)
 - ❑ Thematic concepts were explored in the literature
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Results

- ❑ Active Participation/classroom management
 - ❑ Deep Learning/Critical Thinking
 - ❑ Professional Identification/Values Clarification/Self-Awareness
 - ❑ Personal Narrative/Dialogue
 - ❑ Interconnection between Theory and Practice
 - ❑ Writing Skills
 - ❑ Concerns with grading
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Active Participation/Classroom Management

- *The reflection paper gave me my own way of participating in the class and not necessarily having to, ... if I didn't have anything to say, it might look like I wasn't participating, but then my reflection paper gave me another chance to say my piece..."*
 - *"...it helped me to keep in check and balance to make sure that I've been reading"*
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Deep Learning/Critical Thinking

- *“I had to really reach down and find out what – what I would do and what I think”*
 - *“Well, I guess for me it helped with the information such as the readings because I tend to read really quick and then like let the story barely sink in. And then if I have to sit down and actually put it in writing, I also would go back and look at it so I’d know how it applied to me”*
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Professional Identity/Values Clarification/Self-Awareness

- *"I think it has made me more aware of the things I do personally ... I guess a better understanding of myself in social work"*
 - *"I think in a few reflection papers, I monitored myself very carefully .. it helped me bring about an awareness because it was an area where I had a bias ...but knowing that someone else was going to read my thoughts – I didn't change my thoughts, it's just that I changed the way I presented them which helped me to change the way I think about the situation. Yeah."*
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Personal Narrative/Dialogue

- *““I was surprised when I got the first one back on how many concepts she underlined and the details she made ... she actually went back and read it. And that also kept me alert to the quality of the paper I was turning in...”*
 - *“We kind of utilized our own reflection paper in our own way”*
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Interconnections of Theory to Practice

- *"...it helped me to figure out the situation and how to handle it using the step-by-step model and some of the steps we've had have given me more of a sense of control over things"*
 - *"application of the model because when we have a discussion paper on chapters, I tend to pick out solid points in the text on the how-tos and then give a reflection on how I might have tried it"*
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Writing Skills

- *"I turned out a 5-page paper one time ... I couldn't stop myself from writing because she wouldn't get the whole picture... But then I thought ... never write more than two pages."*
 - *"...it helped you get your feet wet writing again."*
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Concerns with Grading

- *"...it would have been easier if all of the reflection papers would have been graded on a scale of one to ten, that way we could better assess how we were doing."*
 - *"...I don't see where the critical grading, critique, etc. was consistent across the semester."*
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Discussion

- ❑ Issues in the EMPOWERING classroom
 - ❑ Creation of a learning cycle to stimulate praxis (Schon, 1991)
 - ❑ DEAL model (Ash & Clayton, 2004) for structuring and evaluating reflection
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