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Reflective Practice for Professional Development Among Nursing Instructors

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ABSTRACT

Reflective practice among health professionals involves considering and questioning clinical experiences. The process of learning through work involves “reflection-in-action” (the skills of self-awareness, critical analysis, synthesis, and evaluation while executing clinical activities), and “reflection-on-action” which involves retrospective reviews of the clinical scenarios experienced by health professionals (Clouder, 2000; Duffy, 2009). Johns (1995) suggests that reflective practice is the professional’s ability to understand and learn from work experiences to achieve more effective and satisfying followup work experiences.

Nursing instructors play a crucial role in helping nursing students consolidate taught theories and practice through guided and regular reflection on professional experiences (Duffy, 2009). To be effective guides, nursing instructors require the knowledge and skills necessary to implement reflective practice techniques into their teaching. This workshop actively engages participants in examining reflective practice by building on Gibbs’ (1998) six-step reflective cycle (i.e., description, feelings/thoughts, evaluation, analysis, conclusion, and action plan). The goal is to help instructors develop the necessary abilities to guide reflective practice among their students.

KEYWORDS

reflective practice; nursing instructors; professional development

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this workshop, participants will be able to:

- Explain the core concepts and process of reflective practice.
- Discuss the benefits of reflective practice for professional development in nursing.
- Design case studies that could be used to enhance understanding of reflective practice among nursing students.

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Clouder, L. (2000). Reflective practice: Realising its potential. *Physiotherapy*, 86(10), 517-522. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0031-9406\(05\)60985-6](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0031-9406(05)60985-6)

Clouder discusses the concepts, benefits, and limitations underpinning reflective practice, and proposes a series of actions for implementing knowledge derived from reflective practice. This workshop relies on Clouder’s article to strengthen participant understanding of core concepts and outline the benefits of making reflective practice a regular teaching tool.

Duffy, A. (2009). Guiding students through reflective practice – The preceptors’ experiences. A qualitative descriptive study. *Nurse Education in Practice*, 9(3), 166–175. <https://doi:10.1016/j.nepr.2008.07.002>

Duffy’s article describes the potential of dialogical reflection (encouraging discussions among colleagues) as an underused technique in the education of clinicians. This workshop will share the benefits of dialogical reflection and strategies for implementing the technique during the training of nursing students.

Gibbs, G. (1998). *Learning by doing: A guide to teaching and learning methods*. Oxford: Further Education Unit Oxford Polytechnic.
<https://thoughtsmostlyaboutlearning.files.wordpress.com/2015/12/learning-by-doing-graham-gibbs.pdf>

Gibbs' book presents a six-step reflective learning cycle intended for use in education. The framework demonstrates how students can make connections between theory and practice by engaging in a cyclical sequence of activities that includes describing, feeling, evaluating, analyzing, concluding, and action planning. This workshop uses Gibbs' cycle to describe the theoretical framework behind the reflective cycle model. The workshop will capitalize on these foundations to explain key steps of the reflective practice process. Participants will rely on the model as they design case studies to be used during the training of nursing students.

Johns, C. (1995). The value of reflective practice for nursing. *Journal of Clinical Nursing*, 4(1), 23-40.

This article explores the rationale for and potential use of reflective practice in nursing education. Given that this resource provides a theoretical foundation for the workshop, the facilitator could ask participants to read the article prior to attending.

Schulz, A. J., Israel, B. A., & Lantz, P. (2003). Instrument for evaluating dimensions of group dynamics within community-based participatory research partnerships. *Evaluation and Program Planning*, 26(3), 249-262.

The authors describe group work dynamics and factors that influence these dynamics in community-based participatory research projects. The examples explored in the article inspired how groups are assigned and managed as part of the workshop.

WORKSHOP CONTENT AND ORGANIZATION

Duration (min)	Subject	Activity	Purpose
10	Introduction and Goals	Ask participants to introduce themselves to the rest of group and highlight two elements of their expectations for the workshop. Discuss practical arrangements and acceptable interactions among participants during the workshop.	To establish workshop norms and create a comfortable environment.
10	Pre-assessment	Use open-ended questions to assess participants' prior knowledge regarding reflective practice.	To identify the initial understanding of reflective practice among participants.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is reflective practice according to your understanding and experience? • What are the main steps of the cycle of reflective practice? 	
40	Practicing the Reflective Cycle	<p>Present the definitions, core components, and Gibbs' (1998) cycle of reflective practice (see Presentation Strategies).</p> <p>Break participants into small groups to work on the following example scenario: <i>"Imagine you are facilitating a group therapy session and one group member becomes increasingly agitated."</i> Ask groups to consider what thoughts/responses they might have at each stage of the reflective cycle.</p> <p>Allow groups to report back their ideas. Encourage group members to ask each other questions.</p> <p>Note: the facilitator may swap out the example scenario for an example from personal experience.</p>	<p>To develop a better understanding of the reflective practice cycle.</p> <p>To enhance participant competency in engaging in reflective practice.</p>
50	Teaching Students Reflective Practice	<p>Invite participants to work in small groups to imagine a clinical scenario and design a case study that could be used to guide nursing students through the reflective practice cycle.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage participants to use guiding questions provided by Gibbs' (1998) model while thinking about scenarios drawn from their own clinical experiences. • Visit each small group to help draw out personal experiences that might work as exemplar case studies. <p>Groups should also work on the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What would be the ways of sharing the knowledge and understanding derived from 	<p>To facilitate the design of case studies that could be incorporated into future teaching.</p> <p>To help participants to explore the benefits of reflective practice for professional development in nursing.</p>

		<p>reflective practice with other nursing students/colleagues?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does reflective practice enhance individual effectiveness? • How can reflective practice improve the problem-solving skills of an entire professional team? <p>Follow-up with a group discussion where groups can share their scenarios and discuss responses to the questions. Draw on literature cited in the bibliography to fill in any gaps in knowledge.</p>	
10	Summary and Feedback	<p>Draw the session to a close by reiterating the workshop outcomes.</p> <p>Consider collecting feedback from participants before they leave:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you think is the main takeaway message from this workshop? • Can you suggest how this workshop might be improved in the future? 	<p>To consolidate workshop outcomes for participants.</p> <p>To identify how the workshop might be improved in the future.</p>
Total Time: 120 minutes			

PRESENTATION STRATEGIES

Establish workshop norms and create a comfortable environment for participants. In preparation for the workshop, ponder the following questions:

- What size is your group?
- What are the practical arrangements necessary for a positive learning experience? (e.g., seating arrangements, ways of preventing distractions, having participants get to know one another, etc.)
- What are your norms and behaviour expectations for the workshop? (i.e., around device use, participation, posing/answering questions, interactions among participants, etc.)

Evidence suggests that groups dynamics are positively influenced when groups are small (Schulz, Israel, & Lantz, 2003). Therefore, this workshop is intended for a maximum group size of 16 participants. Small group activities may include 3-4 members per group. While groups are collaborating, walk around the room and be readily available to engage participants in discussion (Schulz, Israel, & Lantz, 2003).

Consider using a pre-prepared PowerPoint presentation that covers relevant definitions, concepts, and benefits relating to reflective practice, and make the slides available to participants following the workshop. Include questions that will grab the attention of participants when designing the presentation (e.g., What is reflective practice? What are the types of reflective practice? What are the benefits of the use of reflective practice?)

The slide presentation content could be broken down as follows:

- Workshop learning outcomes and workshop agenda
- Introduction and definition of reflective practice
- Description of the core components of reflective practice
- Introduction to Gibbs (1998) reflective learning cycle, and a practical example that illustrates the steps of the cycle; consider creating a visual diagram that illustrates the steps of the cycle
- Instructions for the “Practicing the Reflective Cycle” and “Teaching Students Reflective Practice” group activities
- Strategies for how reflective practice could be used in the ongoing professional development of nursing students

ADDITIONAL REFERENCES

Howatson-Jones, L. (2016). *Reflective practice in nursing*. London: SAGE: Learning Matters.

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<http://skillsforlearning.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/preview/content/models/05.shtml>

Using Gibbs: Example of reflective writing in a healthcare assignment. (n.d.). Retrieved from

<https://www.brookes.ac.uk/students/upgrade/study-skills/reflective-writing-using-gibbs/>