

Reflective Writing

What?

So what?

Now what?

Today

- A brief introduction to reflective practice
- Models of reflective practice
- Try it out
- Summary

What is 'reflective practice'

“the ability to reflect on one’s actions so as to engage in a process of continuous learning” (Shon 1983)

- Reflective writing is a key part of reflective practice
- It is how you think about, and analyse, events
- Your role in what happened
- What you could have done differently
- What you can learn for next time

You are already doing it

- 5 minutes with the person next to you
- Think about times and places where you reflect during a typical day
- This doesn't have to be about work – it can be about anything in your life
- E.g.
 - Chatting with a friend over coffee
 - Travelling home after work

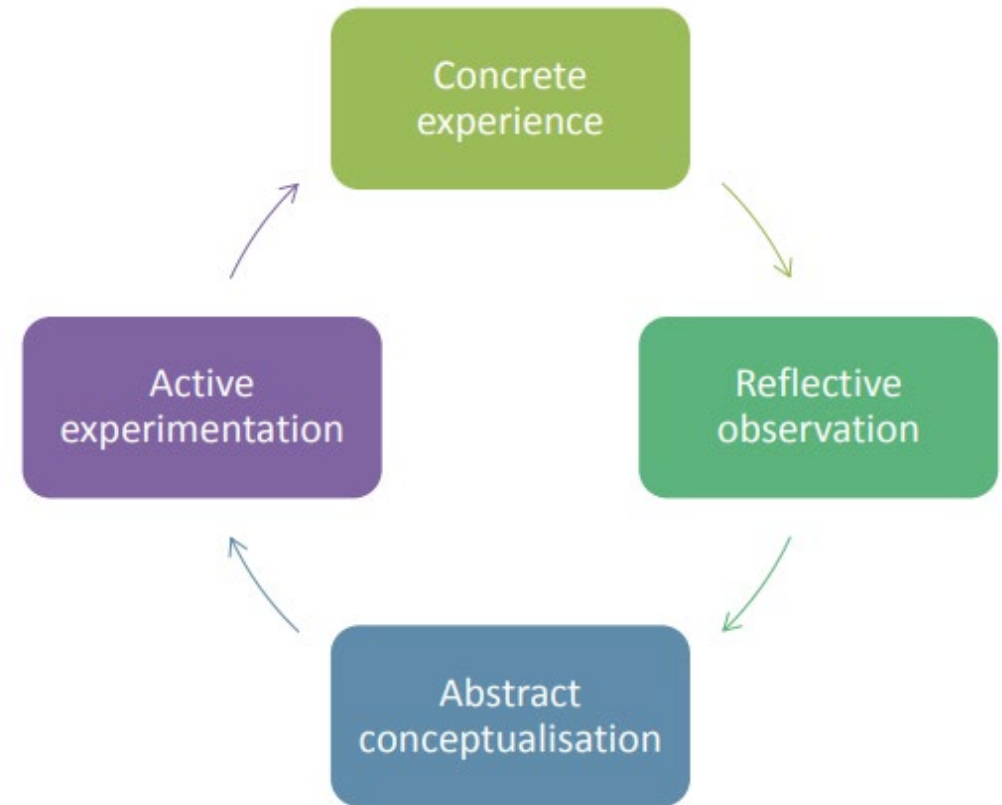
Models of Reflective Practice

- There are different models of reflective practice
- Each is a framework to help you structure your thinking

- No model is perfect
- Find one that works for you

Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle

- **Concrete experience** – what happened, new or reinterpreting a past experience
- **Reflective observation** – thinking about it & noting anything new
- **Abstract conceptualisation** – develop new ideas/concepts about what happened
- **Active experimentation** – apply to new situations
- And.. **back to the beginning**



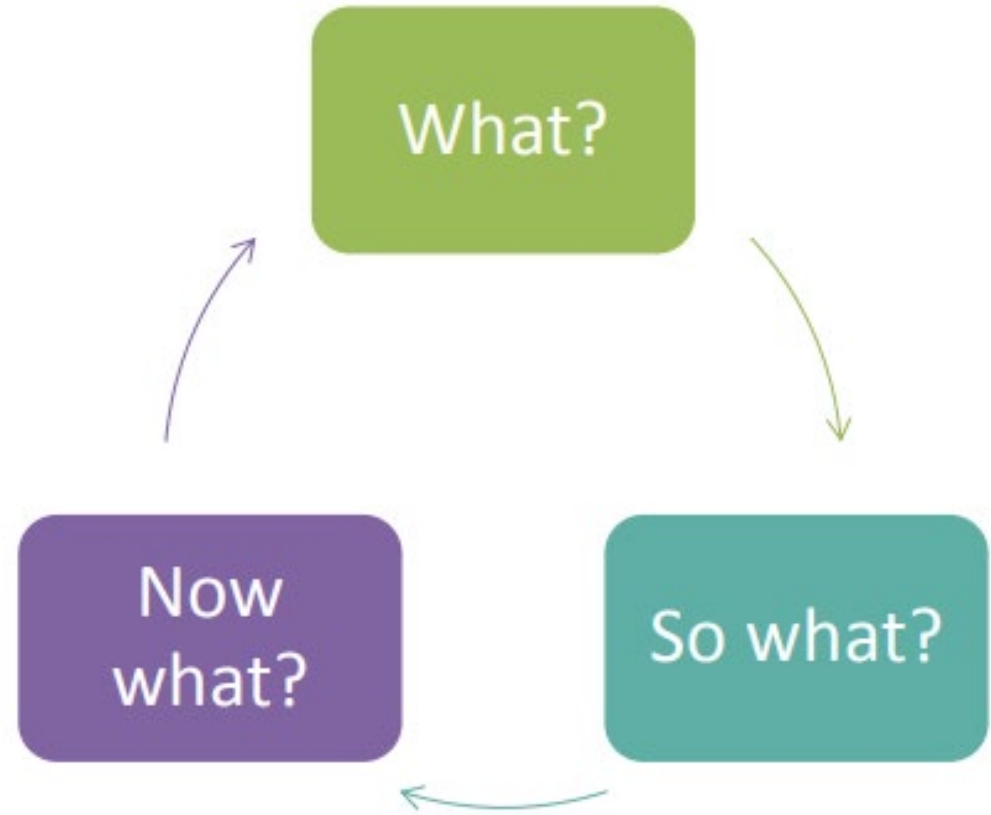
Gibb's Reflective Cycle

- **Description** – what happened?
- **Feelings** – what were you thinking and feeling?
- **Evaluation** – What was good or bad?
- **Analysis** – what sense can you make about the situation?
- **Conclusion** – what could you have done differently?
- **Action plan** – what will you do differently next time?



Driscoll's What Model

- **What?** – describe the experience, what happened, how did you feel & act?
- **So what?** – reflect on the experience, what have you learnt?
- **Now what?** – how will you use this learning in the future?



Pros & cons?

Pros

- A starting point for reflection
- A way to structure your thinking
- Helps you consider all aspects of the situation or experience
- With practice it will become a part of everyday practice

Cons

- A linear process
- Tendency to 'complete the cycle' and stop
- To be effective – reflection must be a continuous and iterative process

Remember – reflective writing...

Is

- Written in the first person – I and me
- Analytical
- Subjective
- A tool to challenge your thinking and assumptions
- An investment of time for the future

Isn't

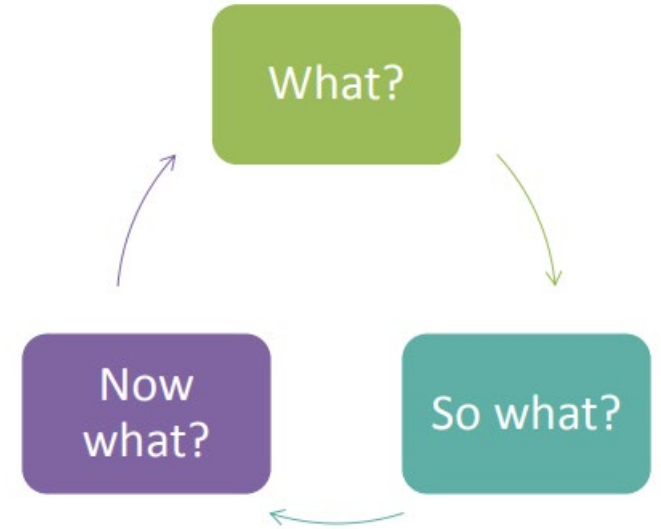
- Written in the third person
- Descriptive – it goes beyond describing what happened
- What you think is the correct thing to say
- A waste of time

Reflective writing for portfolios

- Remember – knowledge, understanding and application
- Reflective writing will give structure to your narrative
- It will help to demonstrate understanding
- It will show that you are learning from what happened
- It will show that you are ‘continually developing your own practice’

Exercise – 10 minutes

- Using Driscoll's model
- Pairs – person A & person B
- Person A needs to think of an activity they have recently taken part in
- Person B will ask the three what questions: what, so what, now what?
- Person A should note their answers
- After five minutes switch places so Person B is now describing an activity.



Summary

- Reflective practice is an essential part of public health
- This time - it is all about **you**...

- Reflective writing is an important part of reflective practice
- There are different models – find one that works for you
- It will take practice and discipline at the start
- The more you do it, the more automatic it becomes

- It will help with writing commentaries for practitioner portfolios

Resources

- Finlay, L. (2008) Reflecting on 'reflective practice'. Open university
[https://www.open.ac.uk/opencetl/sites/www.open.ac.uk.opencetl/files/files/ecms/web-content/Finlay-\(2008\)-Reflecting-on-reflective-practice-PBPL-paper-52.pdf](https://www.open.ac.uk/opencetl/sites/www.open.ac.uk.opencetl/files/files/ecms/web-content/Finlay-(2008)-Reflecting-on-reflective-practice-PBPL-paper-52.pdf)
- Sewell, C. (2017) Reflective Practice Workshop. University of Cambridge
https://www.repository.cam.ac.uk/bitstream/handle/1810/265159/MEMReflectivePracticeHandout_V4_20170616.pdf?sequence=1
- Faculty of Public Health (2012) Tips on Writing Effective Reflective Notes. FPH
<https://www.fph.org.uk/media/1283/fph-tips-on-writing-effective-reflective-notes.pdf>
- University of Birmingham (2014) A Short Guide to Reflective Writing, UoB
<https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/as/libraryservices/library/skills/asc/documents/public/Short-Guide-Reflective-Writing.pdf>