Reflective Practice
Your Guide to Development

What is reflective practice?
Reflective practice is the ability to study your own actions and experiences in order to continuously develop, learn and improve the way that you work.

What actions do you take to reflect?
Spend some time ‘reflecting’ on how you reflect. Reflection is a personal process and it is important to recognise that we all reflect in different ways. For example, this may be through a reflective log (could be written or online) or verbally with other colleagues, a mentor or a coach.

Why is reflection important?
Reflection enables learning and development as it is a way of reviewing the effectiveness of your skills by identifying what you have done, why you did it, the impact of it and whether there is a more efficient way of working in the future. Reflective practice plays an essential part in how we work here at Essex and it is embedded within the values that this community is built upon.

Here are a few examples:

- **Innovative**: Reflective practice enables us to consider different perspectives, garner creativity and, as a result, become better at what we do.

- **Responsibility**: Reflective practice is a key component in embracing accountability within the decision-making process.

- **Community**: By reflecting, we can identify the contributions we make and understand the impact that this has within the wider University community.

We are also committed to equipping you with the skills and knowledge you need to thrive individually and collectively here at Essex and within an ever-changing working world. Reflective practice is the cornerstone of professional development, without which the identification of goals and ambitions would be unable to take place. It is only through reflecting on our current skills and experiences, and thinking about what we would like to learn, routes to achieving these and the responsibility that we play in this, that we can develop effectively.

For more information:

- **Hold a development conversation** with your line manager who will support you to reflect on your work, experiences, actions and skills.

- **Book onto an education workshop** for reflective practice and continuous improvement. This can be booked through HR Organiser.

- **Self-enrol on the ‘learning lounge’ Moodle course** for a wealth of information and resources.

- **Contact Organisational Development develop@essex.ac.uk** for further information.

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


---

### Models of Reflection

**GIBBS’ REFLECTIVE CYCLE (1988)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
<th>FEELINGS</th>
<th>EVALUATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What happened?</td>
<td>What were you thinking &amp; feeling?</td>
<td>What was good &amp; bad about the experience?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACTION PLAN</td>
<td>CONCLUSION</td>
<td>ANALYSIS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If it occurred again, what would you do?</td>
<td>What else could you have done?</td>
<td>What else can you make of the situation?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ROLFE’S WHAT, SO WHAT, NOW WHAT? (2001)**

1. **WHAT?**
   - What happened?
   - What was your role in the situation?
   - What were you trying to achieve?
   - What actions did you take?
   - What surprised you?

2. **SO, WHAT?**
   - So, what have you learnt?
   - So, what was the importance of this learning?
   - So, what more do you need to know about this?
   - So, what broader issues have arisen from the situation?

3. **NOW, WHAT?**
   - Now, what could you do to enhance/improve the outcome?
   - Now, what might you do to repeat this success in the future?
   - Now, what might be a consequence of your chosen course of action?

**KOLB’S EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING CYCLE (1984)**

- **Concrete Experience**
  - What were you involved in?
  - What did you do?

- **Reflective Observation**
  - Step back from the task & review what has been experienced, good & bad.

- **Abstract Conceptualism**
  - Make comparisons between what you have done, what you have reflected upon & what you already knew.

- **Active Experimentation**
  - Plan how you will implement this new understanding in a way that is relevant to you.