

Occupational Therapy Clinical Educator Tips

“Reflection”

There are four aspects of reflection

1. We can only reflect upon our own experience, because we all experience situations differently
2. Reflection is intentional, it is not an automatic process; but must be made to happen. It can be easy for some people and much more effortful for others.
3. Reflection involves thoughts and feelings
4. Reflection is cyclical because experiences are complex and by returning to them more than once through reflection, new learning can be revealed. (Boud, Keogh and Walker, 1985)

The literature presents a range of processes, stages, and levels to represent reflective practice. Following a literature review Atkins and Murphy (1993) identifies 3 characteristics common to the majority of authors:

1. Awareness of uncomfortable feelings and thoughts
2. Critical analysis, examination of feelings and knowledge
3. Development of a new perspective on a situation

An easy way to remember the process is using the prompts: What? So what? Now what? (Akhurst, 2005).

A basic framework for reflection

1. Description: What happened?
2. Feelings: What were you thinking and feeling?
3. Evaluation: what was good about the experience? What was not so good about the experience?
4. Conclusion: what could you have done?
5. Action plan: If it arose again what would you do?

(Adapted from Gibbs, 1988)

There are two types of reflection:

1. Reflection-IN-action: thinking and evaluation whilst completing tasks
2. Reflection-ON-action: thinking carried out after tasks are completed (Schon, 2006)

Activities that can be used to facilitate reflection/self-evaluation

1. Schedule specific time for planned reflection at least weekly
2. Use “How?” rather than “Why?” prompts
3. Provide students with the reflective worksheets/ proformas which guide and prompt reflection
4. Promote cyclical reflection by linking learning experiences with the learning goals
5. Ask leading, open ended questions that encourage descriptive responses
6. Encourage self-rating of a their own ability using the SPEF-R domains
7. Learning goals/contract
8. Experiential/reflective diary or journal (adapted from Branch & Paranjape, 2002 and Turpin & Fitzgerald, 2006 cited in QOTFC 2007)

For more information you can download:

- “Self directed learning and reflection sheet” from:
http://www.qotfc.edu.au/resource/documents/template_3_1.pdf
- “How to encourage reflective practice and self evaluation” from:
http://www.qotfc.edu.au/resource/documents/suggestion_sheet_4_1.pdf

- “Reflection on Practice” resource tool from:

<http://www.practicebasedlearning.org/resources/materials/docs/reflectiononpractice.pdf>

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