

## NAVIGATING REFLECTION: THEORIES, METHODS AND TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE REFLECTIVE WRITING

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### Annotatsiya

*Maqolada ta'lim kontekstida refleksiya tushunchasi o'rganilib, uning talabalarga o'z tajribalarini anglash va ularni kelajakdagi o'quv vaziyatlari bilan bog'lashda yordam berishdagi rolini ta'kidlaydi. Ushbu adabiyotlar sharhida refleksiyaning turli jihatlari, jumladan, uning tushunchasi, ahamiyati, modellari, o'qitish usullari va ilmiy maslahatlar ko'rib chiqiladi. Ta'kidlangan asosiy fikrlar refleksiyaning ko'p qirrali xususiyati, uning o'qitish bilan bog'liqligi va shaxsiy va kasbiy rivojlanishga olib keladigan afzalliklarini o'z ichiga oladi.*

### Kalit so'zlar

*frazologiya, iboralar, leksik ko'nikma, gap birikmasi, madaniy aspekt, ingliz tili, kompetensiya, muloqot.*

Reflection is the process by which students describe their learning, how it has changed, and how it may relate to future learning situations. Ryan (2013) states that reflection helps students make sense of their experiences in terms of themselves, others, and the circumstances that made the material what it is. The objective of this literature review is to examine the theories behind reflection, methods and tips of reflection in dealing with the difficulties during the process of reflective writing. It clarifies the ambiguity around the definition of reflective practice and looks through the reasons why effective reflection is advantageous for the individual. This literature review investigates various thoughts and researches in the field of reflection and reflective writing. Having read, analysed and synthesized sources by a number of authors, the findings from articles and research papers are characterised in the following sub-topics:

- *Conception of reflection*
- *The importance of reflection*
- *Models of reflection*
- *Teaching reflection*
- *Tips for academic reflection*

## Conception of reflection

This section defines the term reflection and its connection to experience and teaching. As Boud et al. (2013) and Thompson (2022) both have similar ideas about what reflection actually is and state that reflection is consideration of both the abstract and the concrete; the process is personal and the results are distinctive. Reflection is something about interpretation and each interpretation is influenced by a multitude of contextual elements. Lyons (2010) provided another definition of reflection, which is about consciously «looking back» at your actions and being able to evaluate the success of your instruction. Complex and analytical reflection acknowledges not only what you have done, but also how a particular action influenced the outcomes for your learners. It is a process that takes place over long periods. Schlippe and Schweitzer (2015) have driven the further development of this idea by stating, "We create our reality by making sense of our experiences. In order to learn from our experience, we need to reflect on it" (p.8). In contradiction with earlier findings, Di Stefano et.al (2014) describe reflection as considering what one is doing. It involves reflection with an openness to change, a readiness to learn, and a sense of responsibility for achieving one's best. Significantly, it suggests that reflection is not only about looking back in time, but also about looking ahead to the future.

In addition, reflection is identified by Li and Ye (2016) as connecting it to particular teaching as a process that combines "learning how to teach" with "learning how to learn," thereby transforming people into expert educators. Wang (2018) supported this claim by stating reflection is a method in which teachers should view problem solving in education as the objective, use their own teaching process as the thinking object, and study and evaluate the decisions, behaviours, and outcomes produced in their teaching. It was helpful to obtain a greater understanding of the fact that reflection is not a singular concept but rather a general term that serves as a shorthand for a variety of significant thoughts and actions.

## The importance of reflection

This section reviews the literature related to the necessity of reflection in learning and teaching experience. The significance of reflection is defined by elaborating on its benefits in various studies. Most researchers consider reflection as a way of being objective. Jay and Johnson (2002) state that reflection critically analyses practice and allows one to view things from a range of perspectives. By citing Lakoff and Johnson (2003), Gillett et.al (2009) support their opinion and add some points about the value of reflection, such as its ability to aid in the development of understanding of how to learn, the subjects to be learnt, and long-term objectives. It can enhance critical thinking and problem- solving skills, which are essential for academic achievement (Beauchamp, 2006). However, it also has additional applications related to life skills: it is a crucial component of personal growth and prepares you for the workplace by encouraging you to develop the habit of analysing your actions

or events and contemplating their effects (Thompson, 2022). Among the researchers, only Brookfield (2017) lists the characteristics that make reflection professional and personal. As he promotes further discussion, reflection is a form of learning that allows us to retain every aspect of any experience, whether personal or professional – why something occurred, what its impact was, and whether it should occur again – as opposed to simply remembering that it occurred.

Another assumption of the importance of reflection, which is highlighted by Richards and Lockhart (1996) in their book *Reflective Teaching in Second Language Classrooms*, is that it plays an effective role in promoting teachers' professional growth and improving teachers' overall quality. Teaching reflection is a crucial means of fostering the growth of educators. Teachers can improve their teaching skills by analysing their teaching challenges and practices (Wang, 2018). One of the main reasons why reflection could be beneficial for learning is that to reflect properly the individual has to actively engage with the learning experience, material, or problem. There is plenty of evidence suggesting that an active learning approach, i.e., an approach where students co-construct meaning and learning, compared to passive learning of 'teaching by telling', has benefits for student performance (Schlippe & Schweitzer, 2015).

### **Models of reflection**

This session provides an overview of the theoretical frameworks of reflective practice, comparing and contrasting the various approaches, as well as the reflective process. Several methods are reported in the literature to address this issue. An increasing number of researchers have concluded that Gibbs' cycle is one of the most influential and comprehensive models of reflection. According to Boud et al. (2013), this cycle gives insight into event review and analysis, and there is a strong connection between experience-based learning and future practice. On the contrary, Greenwood (1998) argues that previous research suffers from the following limitations: if it refers to critical thinking or analysis, as it does not take into account the assumptions a person may hold about the experience; the need to examine different perspectives objectively; and there is no explicit suggestion that the learning will result in a change of assumptions, perspectives, or practice. Finlay (2008) also states that one of the most popular models of reflection is Gibbs' Reflective Cycle, based on Kolb's experiential learning cycle. It proposes that learning happens repeatedly when we produce experiences, understand what we feel and think, evaluate the event, draw conclusions, make an action plan, and make new experiences based on our new insights. I support the idea about Gibbs' Reflective cycle being very informative for the learner, but also not including the necessary information about what reflection consists of. It could be a useful reflection model for people, who want to analyse deeply their situation, while it may be suitable only for some cases: in different situations, you may not use only one of the models; you need to combine various ones and come up with conclusion.

The majority of early research and current work focuses on an alternative model of reflection based on lenses: the student's eyes, the colleague's perception, and practice. In different sources, this cycle is interpreted in many ways: Thompson (2022) refers to as Boud's triangular representation, whereas Beauchamp (2006) demonstrates it as one framework of reflection and names the «three lenses of critical reflection». Both sources indicate that it is the core model of reflection that leads to further learning and captures the important components of reflection, but neither provides information on what reflection might consist of; insufficient information is provided.

There is another approach researched by many studies, which is the ERA cycle that is considered one of the simplest models of reflection and contains only three stages. As Freire and Bergman (2000) point out, it relies on the experience of what a person has had and is reflected mainly on this. Jay and Johnson (2002) support this claim by stating that ERA cycle can be comprehended easily by learners, who are only beginners on reflecting something that they have learnt before. The ERA cycle is very simple and mostly refers only to the experience the person has: it does not go beyond other details, such as feelings to be obtained during this case, as in Gibbs' cycle (Finlay, 2008). This model of reflection is fairly simple and does not require any additional knowledge, thus I believe it is best suited for novice learners who have not yet considered the concept of reflection.

### **Teaching reflection**

This section reviews the literature related to teaching reflection in practicum. Reflection plays an important role in fostering teachers' professional development and enhancing their overall quality. The majority of early research as well as current work focuses on teaching reflection, in which teachers reflect on their teaching abilities, strategies, methods, and other relevant factors in order to evaluate the efficacy of their teaching behaviour and modify it accordingly (Li & Ye, 2016). The contents of teaching reflection are examined and studied from different angles by several scholars and practitioners. Brookfield's (2017) division of the content of teaching reflection is a perfect illustration of this. He categorises it as general level and specific level. Schön (1987) puts forward another concept that outlines five aspects of the content that include teaching, students, teachers, teacher-student interaction, and the educational environment. All of the abovementioned scholars arrive at different conclusions on the substance of teaching reflection, and practically all of them involve three factors: teacher, student, and teaching, which enrich the study of reflective teaching. The content of teaching reflection is rarely discussed in relation to teaching in conjunction with the educational teaching practice of our country, particularly the current situation of curriculum reform in elementary and middle schools.

### **Tips for academic reflection**

The last subsection of literature review focuses on various studies that have researched how reflection is done in practice and the majority of prior research has applied different tips of how learner can apply their knowledge to do the best academic reflection paper on what one has learned. Academic reflective writing needs critical and analytic thinking, a coherent argument, and the use of evidence in the form of examples of personal experiences and thoughts, as well as theoretical literature. One of the most common recommendations in academic reflective writing is given by Ryan (2013) and Richards and Lockhart (1996), who state that it is significant to review the material, related texts and authorities to comprehend the content of the text or a particular event before writing the reflection paper. It is also reported in literatures that to think back to search for strong experiences, beautiful memories, and past thoughts that can be used to build a successful reflective paper. According to another research done by Finlay (2008), academic reflective writing establishes a link between the experience or practice and existing knowledge, therefore before writing students should make connections between their arguments and organise the paragraphs sequence using the appropriate framework to build a deeper understanding of their arguments. On the contrary, Brookfield (2017) outlines that it may be useful to do a private reflection using informal and free structure first, and then adapt this into academic style. Starting with a private reflection, the one can maximize their learning opportunity without self-censorship or linguistic awareness. It is worth noting that many learners can be confused about choosing the proper tip for a particular case due to the large number of suggestions presented in various research studies.

### **Conclusion**

This literature review focuses on the issue of reflection, highlighting its components such as the significance of reflection, models of reflection, teaching reflection, and academic reflection tips. After researching and synthesizing the studies on reflection, I gained a comprehensive understanding of the term's definition: consideration of both the abstract and the concrete; the process is personal, and the outcomes are unique. Reflection involves interpretation, and each interpretation is influenced by a variety of contextual factors. In addition, I now understand the significance of reflection as a teacher: if teachers begin to reflect appropriately on their lessons, students can learn to do so and apply it to their own experiences. Depending on the type of reflection a person wants to compose, the aforementioned suggestions may be applicable in specific circumstances. Despite the fact that the previous research reviewed was all focused on the same issue – reflection, each source has a large number of novel insights. The process of writing literature review assisted me to understand deeply the notion of reflecting. Hence, I could gain many new and various ideas from each source and learn how to apply them in my own experience.

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