Module 4

Practice

-based

story

skills

Module learning objective

— Understanding of how to embed skills developed in professional contexts

The final module is focused on embedding the skills developed throughout the training in trainees' own professional contexts. The module returns to the idea of mindset, asking trainees to re-evaluate their own mindset in light of what they have learned about stories and to identify how this learning can support more collaborative conversations and decision-making in practice.

In this module we will:

— Areas of resistance to working in a more person-centred way

— How to overcome these barriers using narratives

— How narratives can help trainees re-evaluate their mindsets

—How trainees could utilize their learning about narratives to inform conversations and decision-making in their professional practice

'Learning comes not from experience, but from reflecting on experience.'

John Dewey

Experiential and Reflective Learning

Many people have written on the benefits of and the processes that underpin and facilitate reflective or experiential learning. Some of them are summarised here.

Donald Schön is an influential writer on reflective practice. He defines reflective practice as the means by which professionals become aware of their implicit knowledge base – or we could say mental models, or tacit knowledge – and also learn from their experience[1]. In his writing, he expresses how reflective stories and storytelling can capture and preserve experience for the benefits of others:

'Stories are products of reflection, but we do not usually hold onto them long enough to make them objects of reflection in their own right.'
Schön, 1988

He also notes the power of storytelling in driving change:

'Storytelling is the mode of description best suited to transformation in new situations of action.'
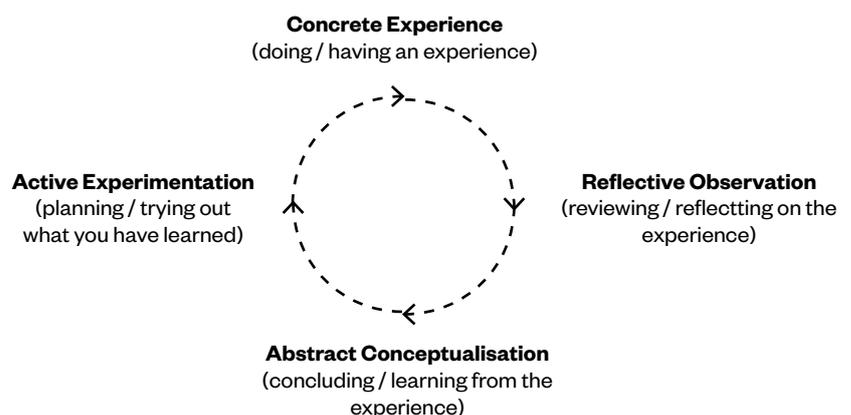Schön, 1988

Reflection includes reflecting on past experience and action, but also looking for insights by reflecting on thoughts and feelings, to increase meta-cognition, or the ability to focus on the processes of thinking and learning themselves. Reflection helps practitioners to make sense of what they are learning, which aids embedding this learning in their practice in the future.

1. Akkerman, S. F., & Bakker, A. (2011). Boundary crossing and boundary objects. Review of educational research, 81(2), 132-169.

Theories and models of reflection

There are several models or techniques which have been developed to assist the reflective process. They all have a similar aim: to provide a way of thinking about and recording experience. Three of these models are set out below. They are not intended to constrain you but to help you begin to structure your thinking in the most effective way. All the models described here share crucial similarities. Feel free to mix and adapt them to your own situation – the important thing is that you take time to reflect upon your work and your learning and learn from your experience.

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Kolb's experiential learning cycle

— David Kolb (1983) identified the following stages in learning.

— Experience – identify the problem, situation or incident.

— Reflection – your thoughts about the experience. Has it happened before? How was this time different? How did it make you feel? Why is this aspect of your work particularly important or particularly troublesome?

— Making sense – your deeper analysis of the situation – What caused a problem or what made it work well? What are the knock-on effects? How did it arise in the first place? What is really going on here?

— Plans for improvement – engaging in this process helps us learn from experience in a very effective way. This is where we set out the possibilities for change and better practice.

Concrete Experience
(doing / having an experience)

Active Experimentation
(planning / trying out
what you have learned)

Reflective Observation
(reviewing / reflectting on the
experience)

Abstract Conceptualisation
(concluding / learning from the
experience)

Johns' model of structured reflection →

Johns (1994) devised his model for nurses and other health care professionals, but it has been adapted for use by anyone who wishes to learn from their (or others') experiences.

Step	Title	Actions
1	Description	Describe the incident or problem or issue.
		What are the key issues within this description which you need to pay attention to?
2	Reflection	What was I trying to achieve?
		Why did I act as I did?
		What were the consequences of my actions?
		How did I feel about this experience when it was happening?
		How did others involved feel about it?
		How do I know how they felt about it?
3	Influencing factors	What internal factors influenced my decision-making and actions?
		What external factors influenced my decision-making and actions?
		What sources of knowledge did or should have influenced my decision-making and actions?
4	Could I have dealt better with the situation?	What other choices did I have?
		What would be the consequences of those other choices?
5	Learning	How can I make sense of this experience in the light of past experience and future practice?
		How do I now feel about this experience?
		Have I taken effective action to support myself and others as a result of this experience?

Tripp's model of structured reflection →

Finally, here is Tripp's model of structured reflection.[3] Like Critical Incident Analysis, it uses a series of questions to examine a critical incident and provide a way of learning from it.

Kind of judgement	Information required	Questions asked	People involved
Practical	Procedural	What should I do? How? When? Where	For and/or with whom?
Diagnostic	Descriptive Causal Effectual Affectual Semantic Explanatory	What happened? What made it happen? What does it do? What does it feel like? What does it mean? Why did (does) it occur?	Who was involved? Who acted? For whom? For whom? To whom? With whom?
Reflective	Personal Evaluative	Do I like it? Is it a good thing?	Do others like it? For whom?

3. Tripp, D. (1993). Critical Incidents in Teaching. Routledge.

Exercise 5.1

Return to Mind-set

Foundation
Yes
Short

▷

Listen to this digital story told by Emily,
a doctor in training

5.1.1

What does this story tells us about bio-
medical and humanistic mindsets?

5.1.2

List all the ways in which communication
reveals a clash of mindsets.
How might communication be improved
in all of these instances?

Three key events in your story that make it memorable	Why is this memorable?