

Toolkit on Reflection

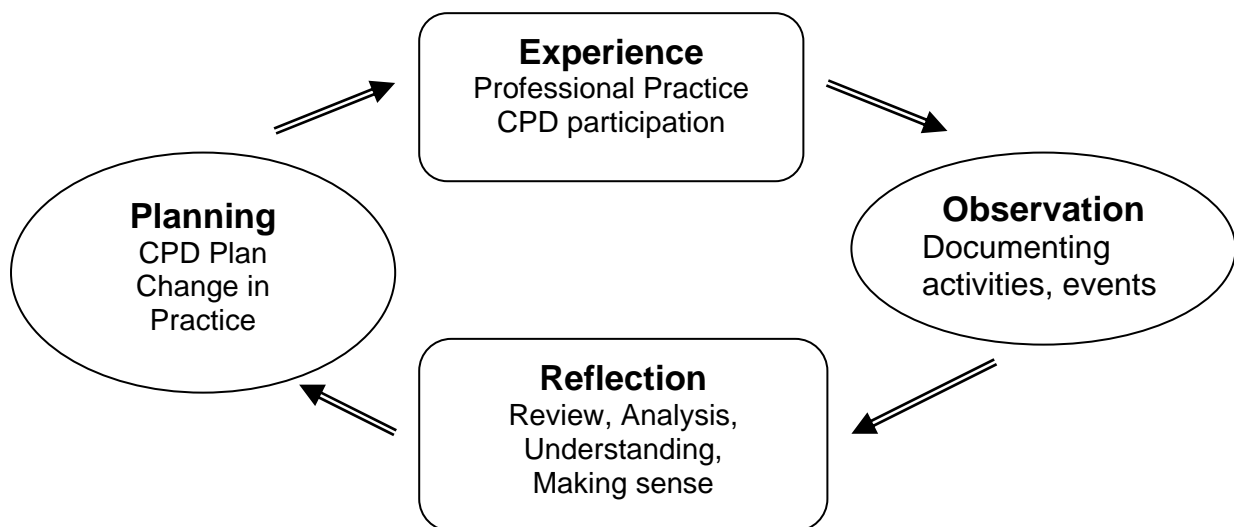
Reflection is an important process of personal and professional learning. This toolkit is intended to help you understand Reflection and engage in reflective learning.

Learning also occurs outside the conference room. Daily work provides learning opportunities to update knowledge and skills. As we link learning with routine practice, CPD and Reflection are strategies to upgrade our capabilities, rather than considered time-demanding nuisances. You should engage in Reflection whenever an experience or outcome has some impact on you, either adverse or positive.

WHAT IS REFLECTION?

Reflection can be seen as *consciously thinking about and analysing what one has done*. Reflective learning looks back over what we have experienced to help us understand our own learning processes and what was learnt. A better understanding of our own thinking will promote independent learning. Learning from experience also provides opportunities to analyse our decision-making processes and identify areas for improving our practice. Reflection also encourages us to look beyond our technical expertise to recognize our interpersonal skills and attributes, such as self-motivation and collaboration. Finally, Reflection provides us information to evaluate our CPD participation. It is part of a cycle of learning.

A CYCLE OF LEARNING



WHY SHOULD I PRACTISE REFLECTION?

The benefits of reflective learning can be summarised in the following objectives:

- To analyse your experiences to facilitate learning,
- To better understand the knowledge and skills necessary for your practice,
- To improve your performance by encouraging the recognition of slips, lapses, and incidents,
- To reinforce positive actions that have resulted in a good outcome,
- To encourage a questioning attitude and critical thinking that fosters self-learning,
- To provide proof of your CPD and progression in self-development.

HOW AND WHEN DO I PRACTISE REFLECTION?

A common tool to promote Reflection is a learning journal, which may be diaries, logbooks, workbooks, files etc. Your CPD Portfolio is your learning journal, in which you record your CPD activities and your Reflection entries. It remains the point of focus for Reflection.

If you have opinions on a learning activity that will help you evaluate your CPD or practice, you should write your reflective comments afterwards, as a supplement to your record of that activity. You should also make a Reflection comment after any event that you consider important, such as an adverse or a favourable incident, i.e. anchor Reflection to events in your daily work, such as a difficult airway intubation, failed regional block, great teamwork in a difficult case etc. You may also wish to make a comment periodically, every 1-4 weeks, as a Reflection overview of your CPD and practice experiences in that period. Fellows are also encouraged to make an annual Reflection comment at the end of Year 1 and Year 2.

WHAT DO I WRITE IN REFLECTION?

Learning Reflection

Reflective comments on a learning activity or an aspect of your practice can be structured along responses to set questions or points. The following are examples to base brief comments on. Use the ones most relevant and useful to your situation:

- A record of the activity or a description of the subject matter.
- Did you feel good or bad, and why?
- What were the strengths or weaknesses of the activity or practice aspect to influence your feelings?
- What was the situation that influenced your thoughts and feelings (e.g. environment, time availability, resources used, your motivation, etc)?
- Given the same situation again, what would you do?
- What are the implications for your practice arising from the activity?
- What is blocking your learning or what are barriers to learning in this activity?
- What gaps in your knowledge or skills or learning can you identify?
- What specific or extra skills, tools, or resources do you need for a similar situation?

Event Reflection

For any event that you consider important and wish to make Reflection comments, any of the points above can be addressed if they are relevant. With favourable events, also comment on your feelings and reasons which made the event "good", to reinforce learning and behaviour. To reflect on an adverse event, critical incident reporting is an excellent format. This covers:

- A description of the event.
- What was/were the cause(s)?
- What were aggravating factors?
- What were extenuating factors?
- Who was involved?
- Could the (adverse) event have been avoided, and if so, how?
- What was the outcome?

- How has the event affected your practice?
- What did you learn from the event?
- Has the event changed any of your attitudes and ideas?

Periodic Reflection

For periodic Reflection comments, you should reflect on your experiences and learning over that time. It is particularly constructive to reflect on your practice in terms of the Attributes of a Specialist Anaesthetist (Medical Expert, Communicator, Collaborator, Manager, Health Advocate, Scholar, Professional). Your comments could be based on the following examples:

- What do you feel about your CPD participation and your progress?
- Has your learning been effective?
- Are you able to meet your objectives in your CPD Plan so far?
- Do you need to change your CPD Plan?
- What activities are more effective in your learning?
- What activities are less effective in your learning?
- How do you learn most effectively?
- What are the barriers to your learning or CPD participation?
- How can the barriers be tackled?
- What are your identified gaps in your knowledge and skills?
- What changes have you implemented in your practice as a result of your CPD?
- Has your performance improved as a result of your CPD?
- What aspects of your Attributes of a Specialist Anaesthetist have you improved?
- Have you changed in your motivation or attitude towards your learning?
- What do you feel about your workplace and your colleagues?
- How would you improve any poor feelings that you may have about your workplace and your colleagues?

HOW MANY CREDITS CAN I CLAIM?

You may claim 3 credits per hour under Category 3, Level 2 for your time spent in recording Reflection notes on your CPD activities or practice.

FINAL TIPS:

You are writing your thoughts and feelings about your experiences to yourself to help yourself. Illustrate:

- The increase in your knowledge and skills
- Developments in your attributes and attitudes
- Outcomes (impact and improvements) on your practice

Be brief, be honest, and be positive.