

# Reflective Practice in Early Years Education



# REFLECTIVE PRACTICE IN EARLY YEARS EDUCATION

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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## Attribution

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- Reflective Practice Toolkit by Cambridge University Libraries is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International Licence.

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## Collaborators

This project was a collaboration between the author and the team in the OER Design Studio at Fanshawe. The following staff and students were involved in the creation of this project:

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# LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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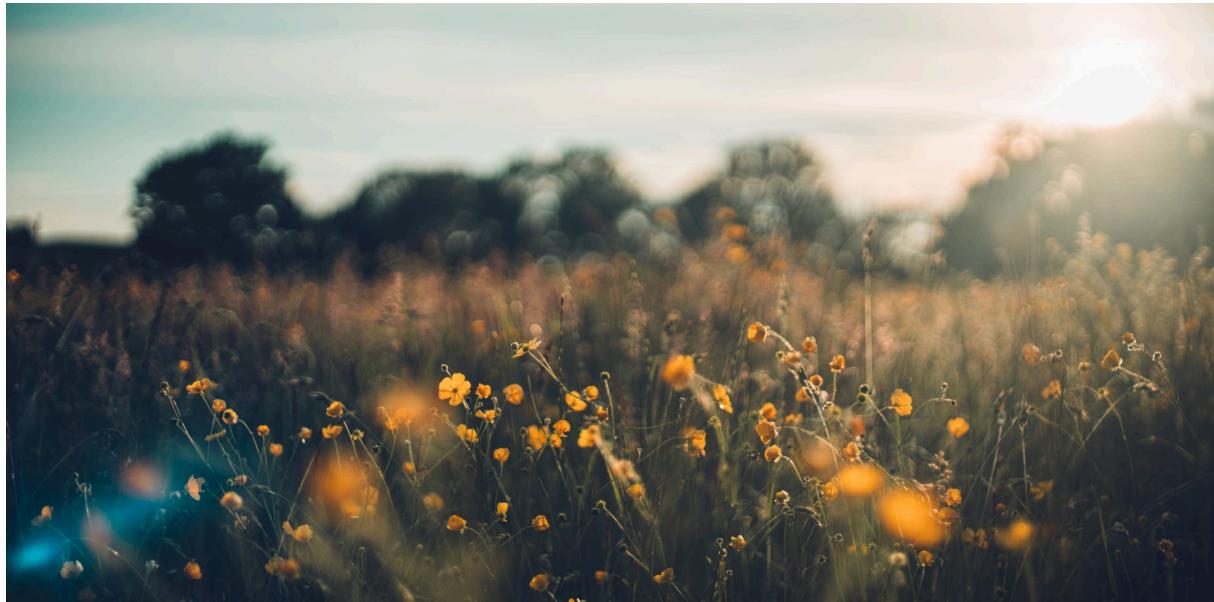


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Land acknowledgements are one small part of disrupting and dismantling colonial structures. As a settler of colonial ancestry-like many other settlers I have benefited greatly from living and working on Turtle Island. As a visitor on the land, I have an important responsibility to acknowledge my privilege to gather and work in higher education.

I would like to reaffirm my obligation to acknowledge the unceded and ancestral land of all the Métis, Inuit and First Nation people that call this land home. This book was written at Fanshawe College on Treaty 6 the home of the Anishnaabe, Haudenosaunee , and Lenape people of Southwestern Ontario.

We celebrate the continuous living cultures of the original inhabitants of Canada who care for this land, and may we remember with humility, kindness, and respect this rich history as we walk softly on these lands acknowledging the important contributions of the Métis, Inuit and First Nation people.

Sheryl Third

# FORWARD

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## Why an Open Resource on Reflective Practice?

Reflective practice is a term strongly associated with lifelong learning in professional contexts such as teaching, and early childhood education and can be thought of in several ways. Defining reflective practice can be a challenge. This resource will provide a context that will allow the reader to consider their obligation to reflect from their own perspective and will explore how to create a practice that best suits their professional setting. This book will bring together in one place the history, the values , the skills, and disposition required to be a reflective practitioner. It is a textbook with elements of a workbook, embedded are opportunities to watch, to think, to write, and to listen allowing the reader to become a purposeful and intentional reflective practitioner.

# CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO REFLECTIVE PRACTICE



## 1.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVE

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### Learning Objective

To interpret and examine the role of reflective practice in early years education.

## 1.2 REFLECTIVE PRACTICE

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**Reflective practice is “a dialogue of thinking and doing through which I become more skillful” – Donald Schon (1983)**

How often do you find yourself replaying the events of the day? Whether it is going through a conversation that happened with a colleague or thinking about how certain events led you to make a decision (Third, 2015). How are you feeling about your decisions? Often this process of reflection happens without us even knowing.

Reflection can be described as a learning tool, something that is going to help you to synthesize, explain, and make sense of something, while developing meaning from your experiences. It can be considered to be a professional competence, a skill but more likely a disposition. It is through examining our heart, our values and our thinking we can examine and rethink our pedagogical practice.

Reflective practice is not something that comes to us as a natural skill, and is not inherently comfortable for most of us. This resource is meant for the reader to uncover their own perspective on reflective practice to determine their own level of skill or disposition and to try out activities that will support an intentional way

of being. The reader will be encouraged to question, to act on one's curiosity, to be a researcher and to ask the questions like, "why am I doing what I am doing?"

Reflective practice focuses on one's thoughts about their experiences, why things happened the way they did and how we can improve on these experiences. This resource will guide you through the basics of what reflective practice is, its benefits, how to integrate it into your everyday life and explore reflective tools such as writing, blogging, and creating a circle of professional support.

As the profession of early years education itself is experiencing transformation, educators too are looking to redefine and transform their practice. This resource will examine reflective practice through the lens of educators while investigating the theory of reflection and how reflective tools can support a practice from a psychological, social, spiritual and educational context.

Finally, the research suggests there is evidence that writing can influence the ability of educators to elevate their reflective practice skills in their daily work with children, families and colleagues. Reflective writing prompts throughout this resource will allow the reader to examine and hold their thinking in place in order to have dialogue and reflect on their practice. As educators begin their journey through the reflective process, writing can act as a catalyst to embrace new skills and pedagogical practices (Third, 2015).

## Sources

Learning to teach: becoming a reflective practitioner by The Open University is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International Licence.

Reflective Practice Toolkit by Cambridge University Libraries is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International Licence.

Schön, D. A. (1983). *The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action*. New York: Basic Books, 31.

Third, S. (2015). "The effects of regular reflective writing on early childhood educators effectiveness in the workplace" [Unpublished paper] Masters of Arts – Integrated Studies, Athabasca University.

## 1.3 CONSIDER THIS

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### Reflective Practice: Try it for Yourself!



An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:  
<https://pressbooks.nscc.ca/ecereflectivepractice/?p=32#h5p-1>

# CHAPTER 2: REFLECTIVE PRACTICE



## 2.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVE

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### Learning Objective

Define reflective practice and how it relates to your role as an early years professional.

## 2.2 WHAT IS REFLECTIVE PRACTICE?

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Photo by Sheryl Third CC-BY-NC-SA

**"Reflective practice is the ability to reflect on one's actions so as to engage in a process of continuous learning" – Donald Schon**

### Why Reflective Practice?

We all undertake activities to think about our experiences, learn from them and develop a plan for what we will do or continue to do. Can you think of a time when you came home at the end of a week where everything had gone wrong? Or maybe when everything had gone well? What are your next steps?. Are you able to answer the question "why am I doing what I am doing?" In order to continue to develop a reflective practice within our workplace with colleagues, children and families we need to examine and understand the reasons

for our reactions, our feelings and our interactions with others, which in turn leads us to becoming a reflective practitioner.

Reflective practice is something which has developed across many disciplines such as teaching, to learn from our experiences. There was a time when reflective practice would have been considered an optional skill or a desired disposition but over the past few years, reflective practice is no longer considered an optional skill but a required disposition.

Reflective Practice has been defined by many including Bolton (2014), Moon (2001), Rogers (2002) and Schön (1983). Reflective Practice is a systematic rigorous self-directed meaning-making process where a person moves from one experience to another through the development of insights and practice with the intention of coming to a deeper understanding of one's personal values and intellectual growth. Schön (1983) suggests that, in practice, reflection often begins when a routine response produces a surprise or an unexpected outcome. The surprise gets our attention, which may begin a process of reflection. Reflective practice is "a dialogue of thinking and doing through which one becomes more skillful" (Schön, 1983, p. 56).

## **Reflective Practice according to the College of Early Childhood Educators of Ontario**

An approach used by educators to analyze and think critically about their professional practice with the intention to better understand and improve their practice. Reflective practice is thoughtful, action-oriented and often, a collaborative effort. Educators use reflective practice to plan, evaluate their strengths and challenges, make decisions and create change, if necessary. Self-reflection, critical reflection and collaborative inquiry are all important elements of reflective practice (College of ECE, 2017).

Although a definition of reflective practice has been included this is only one part of the reflective process. Reflection is a very personal skill or disposition and different people will define it in different ways. It is important to remember that there is no one 'correct' way of defining what reflection is or how it should be done as a lot of this will depend on your own personal circumstances and work environment. For this reason this resource will explore elements of reflective practice that will help the practitioner develop their own practice. In describing reflective practice, I have interchangeably referred to it as a skill and / or a disposition . This is related to the current literature and discourse that suggests reflection is not a natural skill but rather a way of being or disposition . It involves an evaluation of our ethics, values and feelings around experiences. We will explore this idea later in Chapter 6.



## Dig Deeper

For more information on this topic check out the resource links below.

- Reflective Practice and Self-Directed Learning by the College of Early Childhood Educators
- Getting started with Reflective Practice by Cambridge International Education Teaching and Learning Team
- Research Article Revisiting reflective practice in an era of teacher education reform: A self-study of an early childhood teacher education program by Sophia Han, Jolyn Blank and Ilene R. Berson.
- The Ontario Ministry of Education. (2013). Capacity Building Series: Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

## Sources

College of Early Childhood Educators (2017). Code of ethics and standards of practice: For registered early childhood educators in Ontario. [https://www.college-ece.ca/en/Documents/Code\\_and\\_Standards\\_2017.pdf](https://www.college-ece.ca/en/Documents/Code_and_Standards_2017.pdf)

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Schön, D. A. (1983). *The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action*. New York: Basic Books.



## 2.3 CONSIDER THIS

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### Reflective Practice: Try it for Yourself!



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<https://pressbooks.nscc.ca/ecereflectivepractice/?p=42#h5p-2>

# CHAPTER 3: MODELS AND THEORIES OF PRACTICE



## 3.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVE

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### Learning Objective

To review the study of reflective practice by examining theories and reflective models.

## 3.2 THE BEGINNING OF THEORIES & MODELS OF REFLECTIVE PRACTICE - JOHN DEWEY

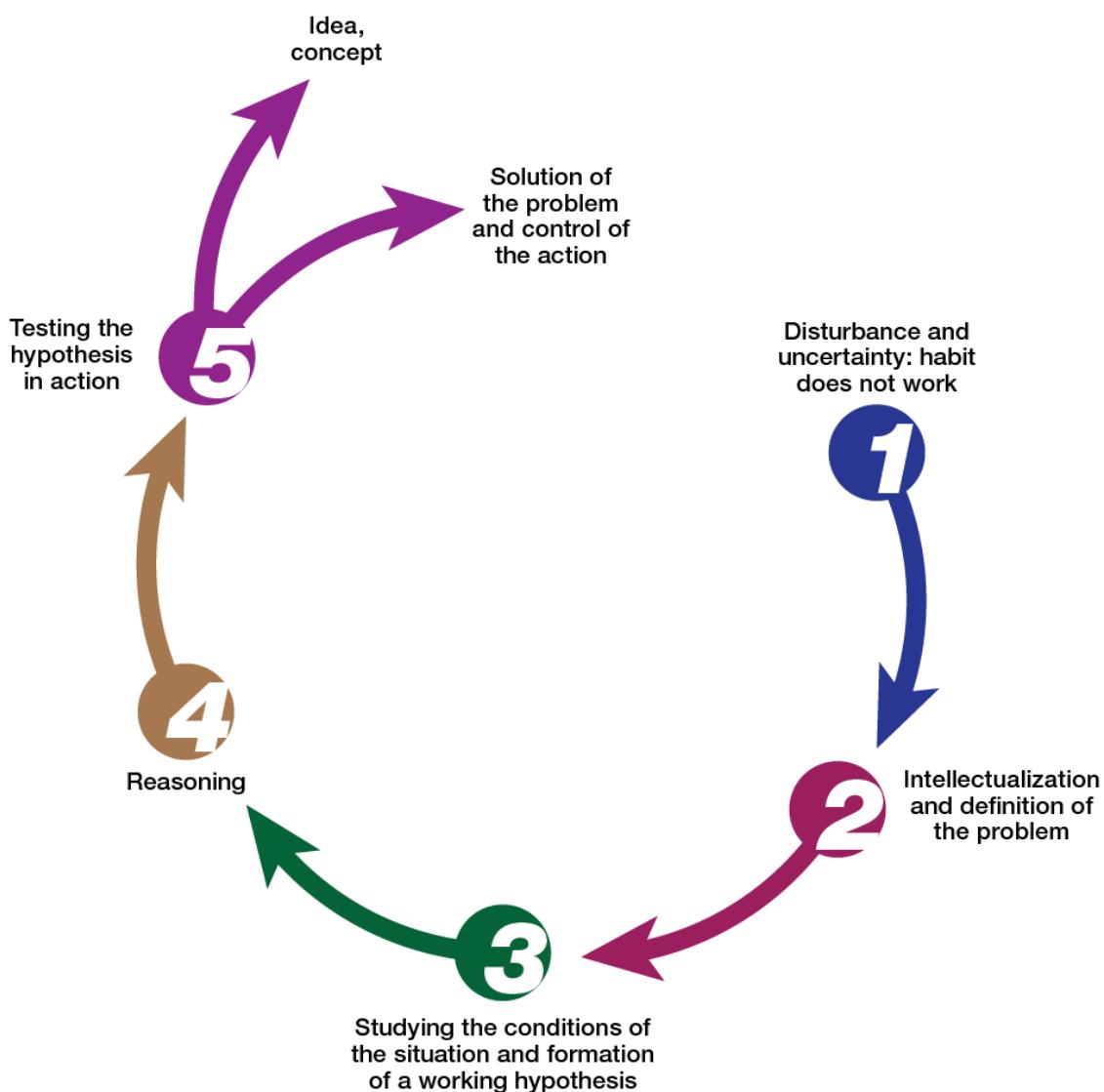
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**“We do not learn from experience. We learn from reflecting on experience.” – John Dewey (1933)**

The fundamental theories and models of reflection and reflective practice were born initially from the work of Dewey and Schön. A century ago, John Dewey emphasized the importance of involving the learner in reflection. He believed that our experiences shape us, and when reflective practice is part of learning, meaning and relevancy is created, which initiates growth and change (Dewey, 1933).



Dewey's Learner in Reflection by Fanshawe College CC-BY-NC-SA (click to enlarge)

### Video: John Dewey

Learn more about John Dewey's theories on education and learning by watching this video by

Davidsons Films, Inc. [3:56] below



*One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: <https://pressbooks.nscc.ca/ecereflectivepractice/?p=49#oembed-1>*

## Sources

Dewey, J. (1933). How We Think: A Restatement of the Relation of Reflective Thinking to the Educative Process. Boston: D. C. Heath

### 3.3 DONALD SCHON

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Schön (1983) based his work on that of Dewey and is most widely known for his theory of reflecting in and reflecting on one's practice. His theory was grounded in reflection from a professional knowledge and learning perspective (Bolton, 2014.p.6). In simple terms this is described as reflecting as the experience is occurring or reflecting on the experience after it has occurred. Reflecting in action refers to situations such as: thinking on your feet, acting straight away, and thinking about what to do next. Reflecting on action means you are thinking about what you would do differently next time, taking time to process (Bolton, 2014.p.6).

## **REFLECTION IN ACTION**

***Reflecting as something happens***

- Consider the situation
- Decide how to act
- Act immediately

## **REFLECTION ON ACTION**

***Reflecting after something happens***

- Reconsider the situation
- Think about what needs changing for the future

Image by Said Nasser Al-Amrani (2021) used under fair dealing for educational purposes.

## **Video: Reflective Practice**

Learn more about reflective practice by watching the video: 3 minute theory by Kayak Essentials [3:32] below.

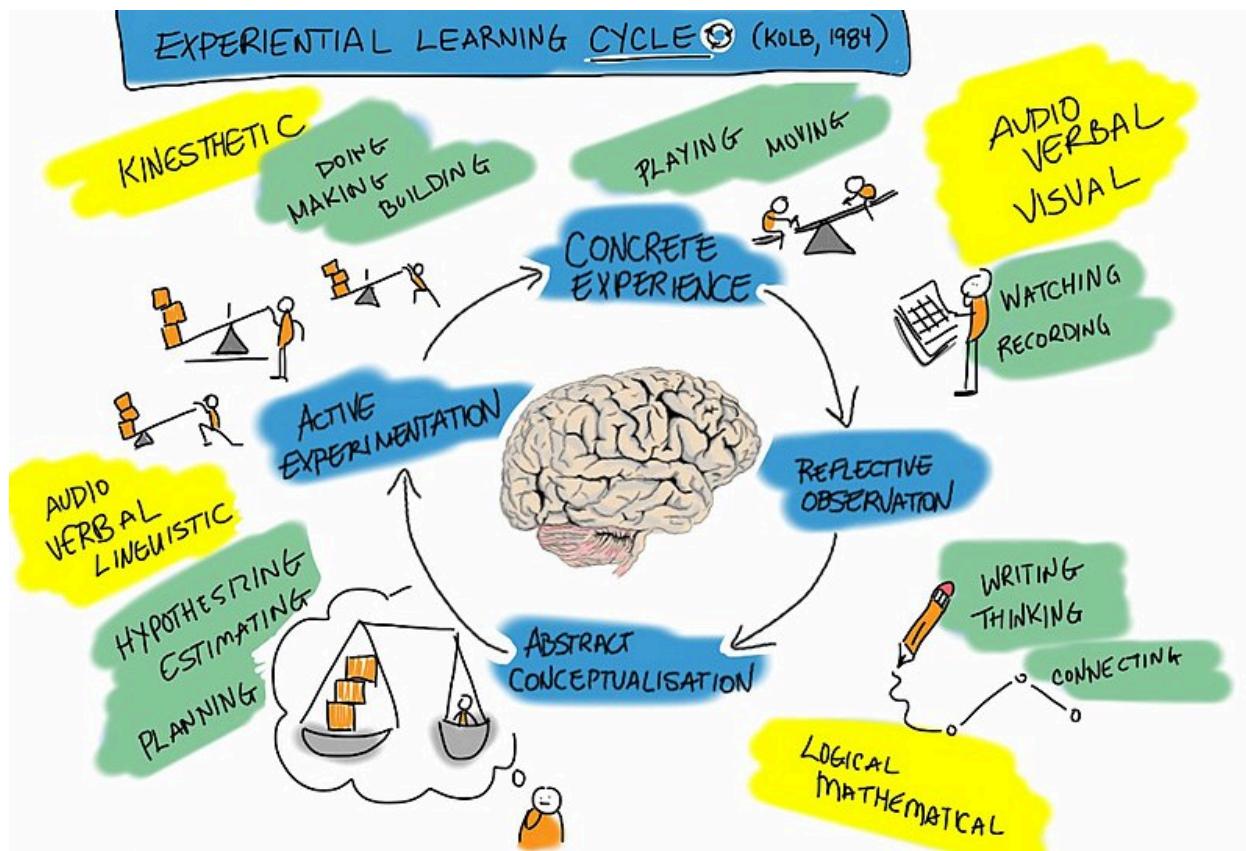


 One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: <https://pressbooks.nscc.ca/ecereflectivepractice/?p=53#oembed-1>

## Sources

- Al-Amrani, S. N. (2021). Developing a framework for reviewing and designing courses in higher education: A case study of a post-graduate course at Sohar University. SSRN Electronic Journal. [https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=3811202](https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3811202)
- Bolton, G. (2014). Reflective Practice: Writing and Professional Development (4th ed.). Los Angeles: SAGE.
- Schön, D. A. (1983). The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action. New York: Basic Books.

## 3.4 KOLB'S EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING CYCLE



"Kolb's Experiential Learning CYCLE" by Giulia Forsythe is licensed under CCO 1.0

Kolb's model (1984) is based on theories about how people learn, this model centres on the concept of developing understanding through actual experiences and contains four key stages:

1. Concrete experience
2. Reflective observation
3. Abstract conceptualization
4. Active experimentation

The model argues that we start with an experience – either a repeat of something that has happened before or something completely new to us. The next stage involves us reflecting on the experience and noting anything

about it which we haven't come across before. We then start to develop new ideas as a result, for example when something unexpected has happened we try to work out why this might be. The final stage involves us applying our new ideas to different situations. This demonstrates learning as a direct result of our experiences and reflections. This model is similar to one used by small children when learning basic concepts such as hot and cold. They may touch something hot, be burned and be more cautious about touching something which could potentially hurt them in the future.

## Video: Kolb's Reflective Cycle

Learn more about Kolb's Reflective Cycle by watching the video by Cheryl Reynolds [2:47] below.



*One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: <https://pressbooks.nscc.ca/ecereflectivepractice/?p=56#oembed-1>*

## Sources

Kolb, D. A. (1984). Experiential learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

## 3.5 GIBB'S REFLECTIVE CYCLE

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This model builds on the others and adds more stages. It is one of the more complex models of reflection but it may be that you find having multiple stages of the process to guide you reassuring. Gibb's cycle (1998) contains six stages:

1. Experience
2. Feelings
3. Evaluation
4. Analysis
5. Conclusion
6. Action plan

As with other models, Gibb's begins with an outline of the experience being reflected on. It then encourages us to focus on our feelings about the experience, both during it and after. The next step involves evaluating the experience – what was good or bad about it from our point of view? We can then use this evaluation to analyze the situation and try to make sense of it. This analysis will result in a conclusion about what other actions (if

any) we could have taken to reach a different outcome. The final stage involves building an action plan of steps which we can take the next time we find ourselves in a similar situation.



Learning by Doing: A Guide to Teaching and Learning Methods by Fanshawe College CC-BY-NC-SA

#### Video: Gibb's Reflective Cycle for Self Development

Learn more about Gibb's Reflective Cycle for Self Development by watching the video by Alan Jones [4:42] below.





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## Dig Deeper



1. "Learning as Reflective" through First Peoples Principles of Learning
2. Reflective Practice Toolkit – LibGuides at University of Cambridge Subject Libraries
3. Reflective Practice – LibGuides at Dundalk Institute of Technology
4. The effects of regular reflective writing on early childhood educators effectiveness in the workplace by Sheryl Third

## Sources

Gibbs, G. (1988). *Learning by Doing: A Guide to Teaching and Learning Methods*. London: Further Education Unit.

# 3.6 CONSIDER THIS

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## A cautionary tale

These are a few of the theories and models that give some context to the process of Reflection. None is meant to be followed exclusively. We will delve deeper into more models in Chapter 8. Since reflective practice requires a combination of skill and disposition, and often creates a sense of discomfort, understanding the theoretical background gives credence to the process.

### Knowledge Check



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<https://pressbooks.nscc.ca/ecereflectivepractice/?p=62#h5p-3>

### Reflective Practice



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<https://pressbooks.nscc.ca/ecereflectivepractice/?p=62#h5p-4>

# CHAPTER 4: AM I A REFLECTIVE PRACTITIONER?



## 4.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVE

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### Learning Objective

To evaluate your own reflective practice and identify the challenges and to begin to consider the strategies necessary to become a reflective practitioner.

## 4.2 AM I REFLECTIVE?

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**"The reflective practitioner allows him/herself to experience surprise, puzzlement, or confusion in a situation which they find uncertain or unique. They reflect on the phenomenon before them, and on the prior understandings. They carry out an experiment which serves to generate both a new understanding of the phenomenon and a change in the situation." Donald Schon (1983)**

There are many benefits to becoming a reflective practitioner but it is not always realistic to think that it will be an easy process. Depending on your circumstances, there may be many challenges to reflection whether these are related to personal situation or work life. With a little thought and planning, most of these challenges can be addressed. This chapter will allow you to determine your current reflective stance and what challenges you may be facing.



## Are you naturally reflective ?

Most of us do reflect more often than we think . The key here is to make reflection an intentional practice with a purpose to improve your practice and often to determine why you are doing what you are doing.

To find out if you are reflective, complete the self-assessment for *Reflective Practice* (scroll to the more detailed Reflective Practice Self-Assessment instrument in a pdf format)

## Sources

Schön, D. A. (1983). *The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action*. New York: Basic Books.

## 4.3 BECOMING A REFLECTIVE PRACTITIONER

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initially reflect and it may take some trial and error to find that perfect fit for you. Rose (2013) also points out the decline in reflection may be due to the way we are consuming information. We consume small chunks or nuggets of information on social media and we move from one topic to another with little time to digest the information let alone reflect on what we're reading, hearing or thinking.

### **Finally, do I have the skills, motivation and disposition needed?**

For many people who are unfamiliar with reflection it can seem a bit challenging, especially if they are

Let's look at some of the reasons reflective practice may be challenging. In exploring challenges you will be able to consider possible solutions to becoming more reflective.

### **For most of us, the # 1 challenge is finding the TIME or right time.**

Whether you are studying, working or both it can be hard to find time to complete your existing to-do list so why add on more things? Doing intentional reflection takes time and as Ellen Rose (2013) suggests it is a form of deep thought, an opportunity to slow down that allows for original thought, perspective and insights to emerge. Anyone in education knows time is always at a premium. Having said that, we are often unconsciously evaluating things and so the goal here is to be more intentional in analyzing your pedagogical practice which requires the time to do so.

### **What if the organizational culture and environment doesn't support reflection?**

Not everyone works in an environment which is open to the idea of being reflective – since it can be difficult to cultivate. If those in charge don't see reflective practice as a valuable activity , it can be hard to really cultivate a practice. If you believe reflection is a mind-set , it may require a specific place, or time to

looking for a recipe, a specific approach or checklist to follow. As described earlier, a lack of time and support can influence your ability to reflect. At this point we can examine whether reflection is a skill or disposition. Being reflective does take a certain level of insight which can for some be uncomfortable, especially if you are new to reflection. Seeing reflection as a disposition does not eliminate the possibility of you needing a certain level of practice to develop into a reflective practitioner, but knowing what it takes is helpful. What is needed is time to slow down, to be curious, motivation to improve, and the desire to know why you do what you do are some essential mind-sets if you hope to overcome any of the challenges and wish to lean into becoming a reflective practitioner.



## Dig Deeper

For more information on this topic check out the resource links below:

- Creating Conditions for Reflective Practice in Early Childhood Education
- Reflecting with Purpose – Simple Book Publishing
- On Reflection: An Essay on Technology, Education, and the Status of Thought in the Twenty-First Century: Rose, Ellen: 9781551305189: Logic: Amazon Canada

## 4.6 CONSIDER THIS

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### Reflective Practice



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<https://pressbooks.nscc.ca/ecereflectivepractice/?p=74#h5p-5>

# CHAPTER 5: WRITING FOR REFLECTION



## 5.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVE

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### Learning Objective

To explore writing with intention as a form of reflective practice.

## 5.2 WHY WRITING FOR REFLECTION?

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**When you are writing you are constructing your own voice and putting on the paper your own thoughts, so you can shape it, delete it, or add to it ..to come up with something. *Ellen Rose (2013, p.63)***

From their book Writing the Mind Alive Linda Trichter Metcalf and Tobin Simon (2002) outline the process of writing that involves listening to what one hears, a place to honour your own voice through daily writing. (p.18) The process listed below is an adaptation of their work with the intention to write for reflection by seeking others' perspectives, being open to your own feelings, values and seeing things through multiple lenses. In these writings it is important to JUST write, don't worry about sentence structure, spelling or content. You are trying to get your thinking on the page. Sometimes this looks like a to do list, that's OK. It's the beginning of creating intentional practice.

## Video: Understanding Reflective Writing

Learn more about Understanding Reflective Writing by watching the video by Learning Services – Edge Hill University [2:06] below.



*One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: <https://pressbooks.nscc.ca/ecereflectivepractice/?p=80#oembed-1>*

## Sources

Rose, E. (2013). *On Reflection: An Essay on Technology, Education, and the Status of Thought in the Twenty-First Century*. Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press.

Trichter Metcalf, L., & Simon T. (2022). *Writing the Mind Alive: The Proprioceptive Method for Finding Your Authentic Voice*. New York: Ballantine Books.

## 5.3 LET'S PRACTICE

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### The Writing Process

1. Consider the provocation – see reflection points below.
2. Free Write for 5 minutes
3. Share your thoughts with one other person
4. Write again for 5 minutes
5. Participate in group conversation
6. Write a final reflection

## Writing Activity

### Instructions:

Choose one of the provocations below and then one or more of the writing prompts and practice writing.

### Provocations:

#### A) Climbing Photo by S. Third, 2022

A photo showing a child climbing



#### B) Dialogue with Natural Materials on Vimeo

This 5:53 minute video shows the unique experience children have with the natural world

C) Pedagogical Practice (College of ECE)

This 34 page Practice Guideline explores the obligation and practice of being a reflective practitioner, through the lens of a self regulating body

D) What is COVID-19 and how does it relate to child development

This short info graphic examines the affects of COVID-19 on development

E) Developing professionalism through reflective practice JBLeach.pdf

This 14 page research paper explores the topic of professional learning, professionalism and reflective practice

F) The Heart of Teaching Toddlers

In this 55 minute podcast author and expert Deb Curtis discusses why toddlers are continue to be where she wants to teach after 40 years

### **Writing Prompts:**

1. What do you notice about the children? Their face, their demeanor, their competence. What captures your attention from viewing the photo, video or reading the article?
2. How do you feel when you are looking at the photo, watching the video or reading?
3. What questions do you have about the content considering the perspective of the child, their family, and desired learning outcomes?
4. What delights you as you examine the material and how is this response related to your own values and background?



## Dig Deeper

Want to explore more on Writing for Reflection Chapter 10 of this OPEN resource will provide more opportunities to explore this component of reflective practice

Reflective writing – Reflective Practice Toolkit – LibGuides at University of Cambridge Subject Libraries

Anti-Bias Leaders in Early Childhood Education a guide to change with Louise Derman-Sparks, Debbie LeeKeenan, John Nimmo

## Sources

Writing prompts adapted from A Thinking Lens for Reflective Teaching used under fair dealing for educational purposes.

Curtis, D., Carter, M. and Pelo, A. (2007). *Learning together with young children: A curriculum framework for reflective teachers*. St. Paul, MN: Redleaf Press.

## 5.4 CONSIDER THIS

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### Reflective Practice



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<https://pressbooks.nscc.ca/ecereflectivepractice/?p=86#h5p-6>

# CHAPTER 6 – EVERYDAY REFLECTION



## 6.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVE

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### Learning Objectives

Understand why reflective practice is a professional responsibility

## 6.2 REFLECTIVE PRACTICE IN THE WORKPLACE

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**"It's on the strength of observation and reflection that one finds a way, so we must dig and delve unceasingly." Charles Monet**

"Why reflective practice is necessary for an early educator is not as much of a debate today, but even more important is the necessity to make space and time to think deeply about our why?" Roffey-Barentson & Malthouse (2009, p. 16) introduces ten useful 'benefits of reflective practice' which address the nature of disposition and reflective practice, as well as the personal and professional benefits of reflection. These ten benefits highlight the need to integrate our thinking and incorporate our values and beliefs. By recognizing this, we may be more inclined to establish a day to day practice of reflection.

1. **Improving our own practice;** if one takes time to reflect on the different parts of their work, it is bound to lead to improvement.

2. **Learning from reflective practice;** there is good evidence that purposeful reflection helps ‘deep’ learning take place, and this helps make connections between different aspects of your work.
3. **Enhances problem solving skills;** by carefully and honestly considering problems, and multiple perspective solutions can be found.
4. **Becoming a critical thinker;** Critical thinking is about ‘thinking well’ and reflective practice allows one to adjust what they think to take account of changes in circumstances. Are our assumptions correct?
5. **Making Decisions;** as you reflect on your practice, you will find you need to make decisions about what to do (or not to do) next.
6. **Improving your own organizational skills;** If one is thinking carefully about what they are doing, identifying possible actions and choices, trying out solutions, and adjusting what to do involves a great deal of organization.
7. **Managing personal change;** if you are using the techniques of reflective practice, which involves, calm, thoughtful, honest, critical and organized thinking and action, this should introduce a calming and less emotional response to that change.
8. **Acknowledging personal values;** there will be things which take place within a professional situation as an educator which will bump up one’s own personal values such as what you believe in, and what you think is wrong or right.
9. **Taking your own advice;** workers are often more critical of their own work than anyone else.
10. **Recognizing emancipatory benefits;** if as a worker one reflects on the nine benefits of reflective practice which have so far been described; this is a model of practice which represents the educator as someone with influence over their own practice *This is what is at the heart of reflective practice* (Third,2015).

### Activity: Reflective Practice in Work Integrated Learning



Now view the Reflective Practice in Work Integrated Learning module by Niagara College below which examines reflection from a workplace integrated learning lens OR (WIL). Watch and complete the activities.



*An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:*

<https://pressbooks.nscc.ca/ecereflectivepractice/?p=92#h5p-7>

## Sources

Monet, C. (n.d.). <https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/23758-it-s-on-the-strength-of-observation-and-reflection-that-one>.

Roffey-Barentsen, J., & Malthouse, R. (2009). Reflective Practice in the Lifelong Learning Sector. Exeter England: Learning Matters.

Third, S. (2015). The effects of regular reflective writing on early childhood educators effectiveness in the workplace [Unpublished paper] Masters of Arts – Integrated Studies, Athabasca University, p.16.

## 6.3 ELEMENTS OF AN INTENTIONAL PRACTICE

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Photo by Sheryl Third is licensed under CC-BY-NC-SA

As you move through this resource one of the goals for the reader is to have a clear motivation for being reflective. It is a deliberate, intentional way of being. The more the educator can remove or detach themselves from their thoughts and feelings, the more objective and curious you can become. A quote whose author is unknown speaks to this intention of reflection, “between stimulus and response there is a space. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and our freedom” ( It is essential to find the space and time for deep thinking and reflection.

## Video: Reflection in Learning

Learn more about reflection in learning by watching the video by MQ LearnTV [6:00] below.



*One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: <https://pressbooks.nscc.ca/ecereflectivepractice/?p=95#oembed-1>*

## Dig Deeper



For more information on this topic check out the resource links below:

- Making Experience Count: The Role of Reflection in Individual Learning (Research paper)
- Time to reflect – why does it matter in the workplace? (Blog)
- Technology Rich Inquiry Based Research-Reflective Topics ( Blog by Diane Kashin)



## 6.4 CONSIDER THIS

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### Reflective Practice



An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:  
<https://pressbooks.nscc.ca/ecereflectivepractice/?p=97#h5p-8>

# CHAPTER 7: RECLAIMING REFLECTIVE PRACTICE



## 7.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVE

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### Learning Objective

Explore ways to develop and reclaim your reflective practice.

## 7.2 BEING REFLECTIVE BEGINS WITH REFLECTIVE THINKING

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**"I write because I don't know what I think until I read what I say."**-  
*Flannery O'Connor*

In On Reflection, an essay on technology, education, and the status of thought in the twenty-first century by Ellen Rose ( 2013), she challenges us to reflect on reflection as she asks us to consider reflection in the context of time, and silence and not in a context of a forced practice.

As many know we bump up against the ideology of becoming unbusy, of providing space and time to ponder, think, reflect. In our fast paced technology rich world and coming off the global pandemic of 2019 we

have been tasked to consider the many priorities we have set for ourselves. What are ways we can simplify or prioritize what is really important to our work

As we consider our reflective practice, many obstacles may still come up, “there is only so much time in a day”, “I have to do this or that”, “I must follow this curriculum or that”, “I only have so much time to teach this.”

Rose (2013) more than once used the term **stewardship** in referring to reclaiming reflective practice. She suggests we must be stewards of the use of writing, of technology and of reflective practice. According to Merriam-Webster (n.d.) stewardship is **“the conducting, supervising, or managing of something; especially the careful and responsible management of something entrusted to one’s care. The act or activity of looking after and making decisions about something.”**

When you take the time to seemingly do nothing, notice what you are thinking about, try to go with those thoughts and see where they take you. There are multiple ways to be reflective both individually or in groups. (More on group thinking in future chapters.)

**Self reflection** is typically where one’s reflective practice begins. This can resemble things you are already doing: writing which may include blogs, papers, journaling, creating a professional portfolio ,walking, thinking through meditation, yoga and storytelling. What are the ways you are currently practicing slowing down?

## Technology & Reflective Practice

Take a look at how technology is being used for reflection:

1. Reflections in Education by Mary Mitches
2. Blog: My Reggio Inspired Journey: Live, Learn, Grow by Sheryl Third
3. Professional Portfolio of Sheryl Third.

## Video: Reflective Writing

Learn more about Reflective Writing by SkillsTeamHullUni watching the video [6:07] below.



*One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: <https://pressbooks.nscc.ca/ecereflectivepractice/?p=103#oembed-1>*

### Dig Deeper



For more information on this topic check out the resource links below:

- Blog | Early Childhood Pedagogy Network
- Gather (The Joy of StoryTelling -Book)
- Contemplating the Reflective Process – Strive

## Sources

Merriam-Webster (n.d.). Stewardship. Merriam-Webster.com dictionary. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/stewardship>.

Rose, E. (2013). *On Reflection: An Essay on Technology, Education, and the Status of Thought in the Twenty-First Century*. Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press.

## 7.3 CONSIDER THIS

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### Reflective Practice

Thinking of the word stewardship, post your ideas to the Padlet of how you are building your stewardship of reflection into your day to day at work or school



*An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:*

<https://pressbooks.nscc.ca/ecereflectivepractice/?p=105#h5p-9>

# CHAPTER 8: THE DISPOSITION , VALUES, PRINCIPLES AND ETHICS OF A REFLECTIVE PRACTITIONER



## 8.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVE

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### Learning Objective

Identify the values, principles and ethics related to being a reflective practitioner

## 8.2 A REFLECTIVE MINDSET



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**"Unless teachers develop the practice of critical reflection, they stay trapped in unexamined judgments, interpretations, assumptions, and expectations. Approaching education as a reflective practitioner involves fusing personal beliefs and values into a professional identity" (Larrivee, 2000, p.293 in Finlay, L, 2008).**

Disposition can mean many things to different people but according to Merriam-Webster (n.d.) disposition is defined as a “person’s inherent qualities of mind and character, prevailing tendency, mood, or inclination, temperament or makeup.”

So why is it essential to examine disposition as related to a reflective mindset? There is much debate about whether reflective practice is a technical skill that can be taught, or a way of being an attitude or a personal quality that can be cultivated.

There is evidence that supports creating a culture of reflection, a disposition of thinking critically, and of valuing multiple perspectives as a context of one’s own reflective pedagogy. Farrell (2014) Rose (2013) and others suggest there are main characteristics of a reflective educator some of which include open-mindedness, whole-heartedness, and responsibility. Dewey (1933, 1986) has noted that all three of these attitudes are not only important in “order that the intention of thinking in a reflective way...they are traits of personal character that have to be cultivated” (p.139). Rose (2013) speaks to responsibility as stewardship stating we must be stewards of the use of writing, of technology and of reflective practice. Reflection can be cultivated by a teacher for whom reflection is an ethical commitment (pg.105).

**"Children do not experience our intentions, no matter how heartfelt. They experience what we manifest in tone and behaviour." Gordon Neufeld**

## Video: A Reflective Mindset

To learn more about a reflective mindset watch the video: A Reflective Mindset – The Secret to a Better and Longer Life by Ali Fenwick [11:41].



*One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: <https://pressbooks.nscc.ca/ecereflectivepractice/?p=111#oembed-1>*

## Sources

Dewey, J. (1933). How We Think: A Restatement of the Relation of Reflective Thinking to the Educative Process. Boston: D. C. Heath.

Farrell, T. S. C. (2014). 'Teacher you are stupid!' - Cultivating a reflective disposition. *TESL-EJ*, 18(3). <http://www.tesl-ej.org/wordpress/issues/volume18/ej71/ej71a2/>

Finlay, L. (2008). Finlay, Linda (2008). Reflecting on 'Reflective practice'. Practice-based Professional Learning Paper 52, The Open University. <https://oro.open.ac.uk/68945/>

Larrivee, B. (2000). Transforming teaching practice: becoming the critically reflective teacher. *Reflective Practice*, 1(3), 293-307. <https://doi.org/10.1080/713693162>

Merriam-Webster. (n.d.). Disposition. In Merriam-Webster.com dictionary. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/disposition>.

Neufeld, G., & Maté, G. (2006). Hold on to your kids: why parents need to matter more than peers.

Rose, E. (2013). *On Reflection: An Essay on Technology, Education, and the Status of Thought in the Twenty-First Century*. Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press.

## 8.3 VALUES, PRINCIPLES AND ETHICS RELATED TO BEING A REFLECTIVE PRACTITIONER

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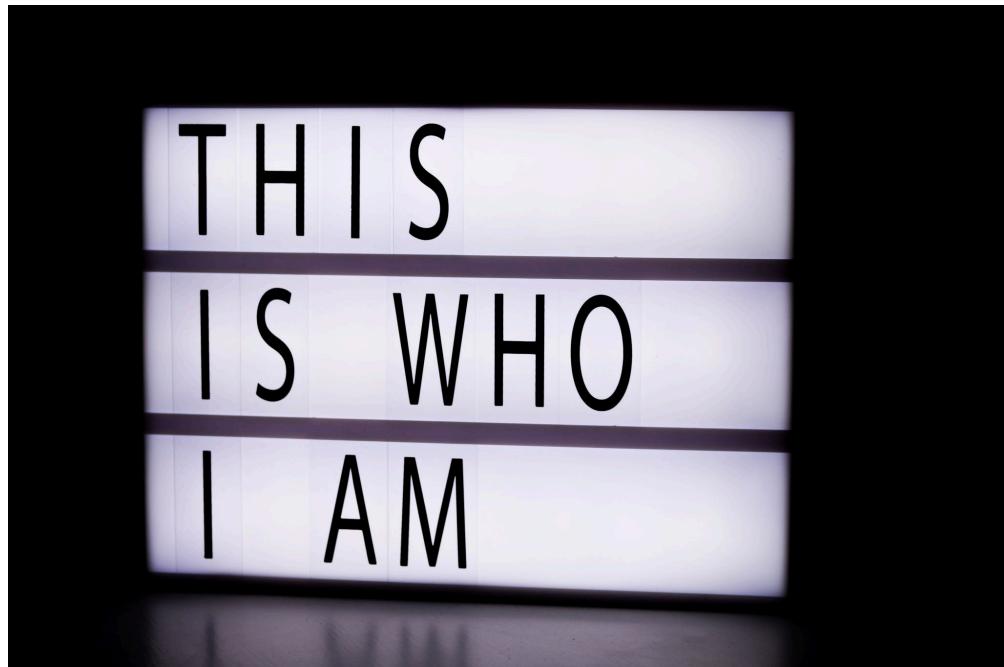


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Rachel Carson wrote the book *A Sense of Wonder* originally in 1956 and republished it in 1998 and 2017. In this book Carson talks about the hope to inspire both children and adults to appreciate and hence value the spiritual, emotional and sensory experience of the living world. Dr. Hopi Marten shares Ojibwe worldviews in context to teaching. He explores spiritual, cultural, and land-based learning as a teacher through what has been coined a seasonal pedagogy. Both these examples demonstrate the power disposition, culture, values, and beliefs have on our work. This is not a one-time conversation but a contextual concept around reflective practice that can be embedded in every interaction we have within our workplace.

Take some time to explore Dr. Hopi Marten's website [The Edge of the Bush](#). Watch the videos, listen to the teachings, and feel mother earth all around you. What touches your heart?

## Disposition of Reflective Practice

Read the list below of dispositions created over the years based on research, readings, and early educators' own thoughts on what a disposition of reflective practice is. Do you see yourself in these dispositions?

1. Are you optimistic?
2. Are you open minded?
3. Are you appreciative?
4. Are you flexible?
5. Are you purposeful?
6. Are you curious and ask questions to challenge ideas ?
7. Do you embrace change, seek new ways of doing things?
8. Do you seek collaboration?
9. Do you question your feelings?
10. Do you work from a value based lens?

Are there others?

## Listen: The Power of Reflective Practice for Positive Mental Health with Jen Rafferty

The Power of Reflective Practice for Positive Mental Health with Jen Rafferty [16:51]



For more information on this topic check out the resource links below:

- Reflective Practice and Continuous Learning
- Relationship between Reflective Disposition toward Teaching and Effective Teaching
- Developing a Disposition for Reflective Practice That Sustains Continuous Professional Learning
- Beginnings Workshop on Dispositions by The Childcare Exchange

## Sources

Carson, R., & Pratt, C. (1965). *The Sense of Wonder*. New York: Harper & Row.

Marten, H. (n.d.). A seasonal pedagogy. *The Edge of the Bush: Where Worldviews Meet*.  
<https://edgeofthebush.ca/a-seasonal-pedagogy/>

## 8.4 CONSIDER THIS

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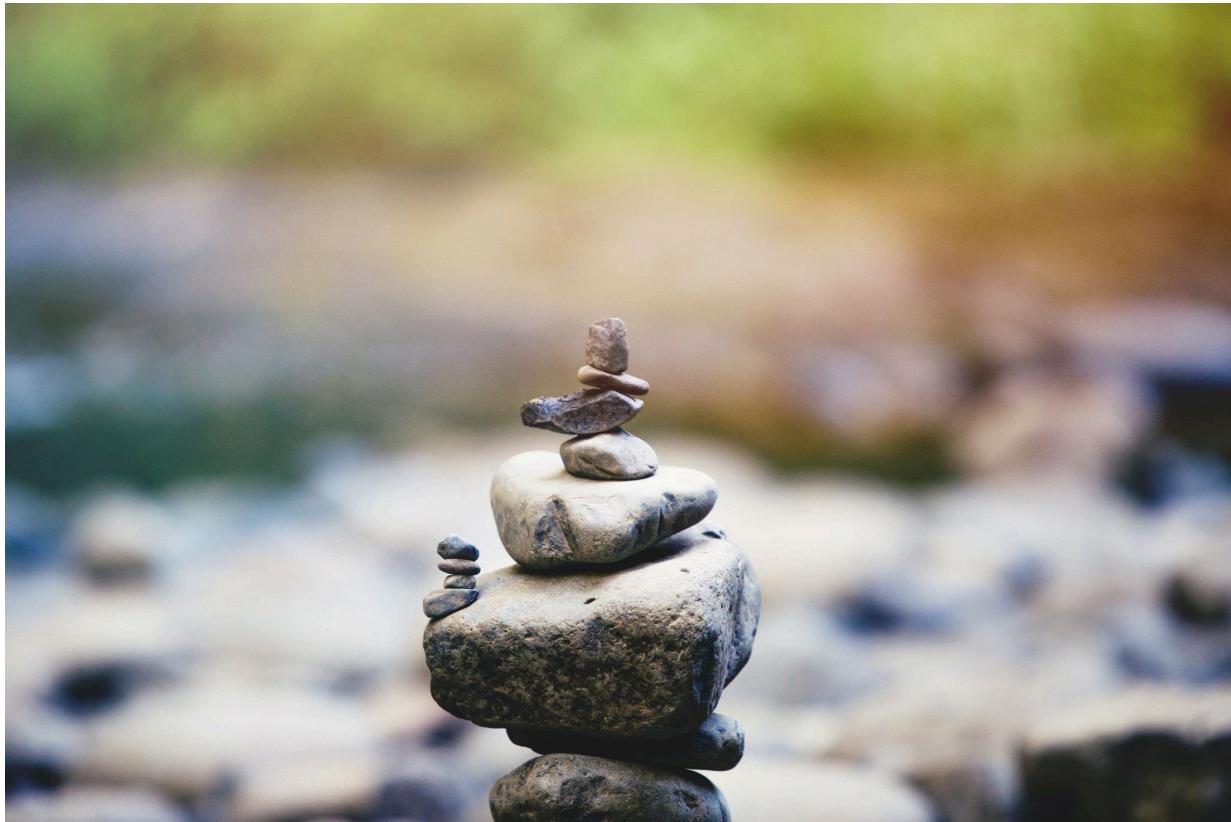


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### Reflective Practice



An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online

here:  
<https://pressbooks.nscc.ca/ecereflectivepractice/?p=117#h5p-10>

# CHAPTER 9: COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE AND THE REFLECTIVE PROCESS



## 9.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVE

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### Learning Objective

To Identify your community of practice and pedagogical friends.

## 9.2 WHAT IS A COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

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**"It is only through a give and take with others and by confronting the challenges they pose that critical reflection can be promoted"**  
**(Boud, 2001 p.14-15)**

## Video: Where Good Ideas Come From

To learn about where good ideas come from watch the video below by Steve Johnson at Riverhead Books [4:06].



*One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: <https://pressbooks.nscc.ca/ecereflectivepractice/?p=123#oembed-1>*

## Read

Jean Lave, Etienne Wenger and communities of practice by infed.org:

After watching and reading the above content, it is important to have a shared understanding of what we mean when we refer to a community of practice. “The College of Early Childhood Educators (2018, p. 2)” references the communities of practice definition by “Wenger et al. (2002)” as “a group of professionals who share a common concern or passion about a practice topic and who wish to learn how to improve this area of practice by communicating and collaborating with each other regularly over time.” Wenger (1999), states there are three main elements that make a community of practice different from other groups: the domain is the connection between the group and there is some commitment to a shared competence that makes it different than a club or group of friends. This community is the second element. This means the group is engaging in a relationship to help learn from one another and finally the third element is the practice . This is the

practitioner looking to share their experience around a sustained problem or seeking solutions. Communities of practice often are more formalized but not necessarily formal . They provide a time and space and a protocol for coming together. A community of practice can have members who come in and out of the group but usually a core group exists to help move the interests of the group forward through solutions and practice.

## Sources

Boud, D. (2001). Using journal writing to enhance reflective practice. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*, 90, 9-17. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ace.16>

College of Early Childhood Educators (2018). Communities of practice. <https://www.college-ece.ca/en/Documents/CPL%20Resource-Communities-Of-Practice.pdf>

Wenger, E. (1999). *Communities of Practice. Learning, Meaning and Identity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Wenger, E., McDermott, R., & Snyder, W. (2002). *Cultivating Communities of Practice: A Guide to Managing Knowledge*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press.

## 9.3 CULTIVATING A COMMITMENT TO BEING REFLECTIVE

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Boud (2001) reinforces the benefit of reflection in a social context for educators: These reflective processes can be undertaken in isolation from others, but doing so often leads to a reinforcement of existing views and perceptions. Working in pairs or with a group for which learning is reason for being can begin to transform perspectives and challenge old patterns of learning. It is only through a give and take with others and by confronting the challenges they pose that critical reflection can be promoted.

As educators embark on the practice of reflection the elements that Taylor (2007) describes supports the process of reflection and creates concreteness to what for some might feel quite abstract. The notion of reflecting individually, with a critical friend or mentor is noted as the educator moves through the stage of conscious competence. Rather than becoming complacent or habitual, Taylor (2007) suggests moving into reflective consciousness which he describes as mature practice. Skattebol (2010), suggests “engagement in this type of reflection propels educators to examine the dimensions of the teaching or learning that popular discourse regards as interior, and how non-conscious (often collective) habits operate in tandem with our conscious and cognitively driven interactions” (p.89).

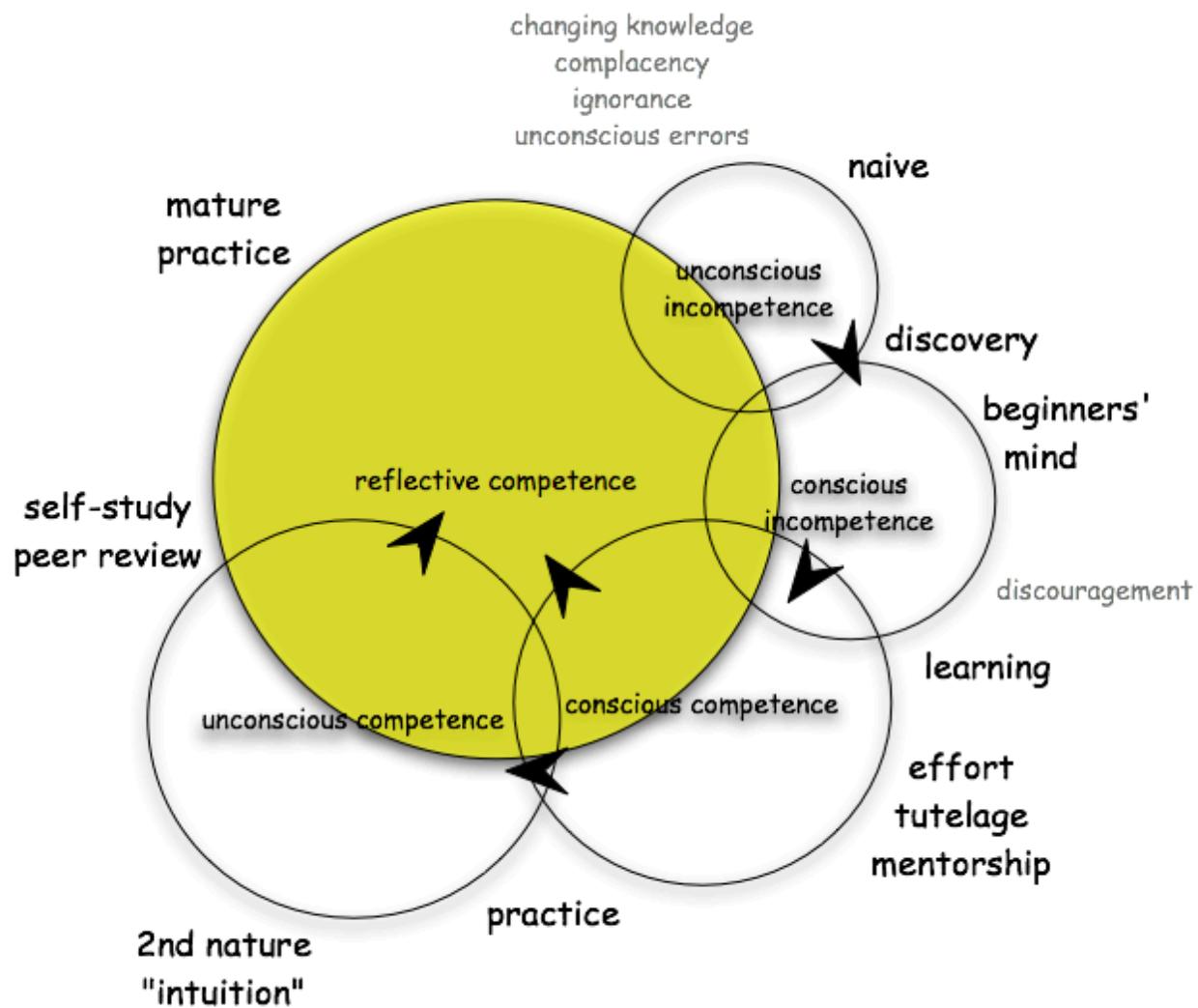


Figure 1- Conscious Competence Learning Model. Courtesy of Will Taylor, Department of Homeopathic Medicine, National College of Natural Medicine, Portland, Oregon, USA, March 2007.

This context of reflection takes our thinking from a habit to an intention or reflective consciousness and this is the essence of reflective practice.



## Dig Deeper

For more information on this topic check out the resource links below:

- Communities of Practice ( The College of ECE)
- Frontiers | Reflective Practice: A Method to Improve Teachers' Well-Being. A Longitudinal Training in Early Childhood Education and Care Centers | Psychology ( Research Article)
- Creating Conditions for Reflective Practice in Early Childhood Education ( Journal Article)
- Key Concept: Learning Communities

## Sources

Boud, D. (2001). Using journal writing to enhance reflective practice. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*, 90, 9-17. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ace.16>

Skattebol, J. (2010). Affect: a tool to support pedagogical change. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, 31(1), 75-91. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01596300903465435>

Taylor, E. (2007). An update of transformative learning theory: a critical review of the empirical research (1999–2005) *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, 26(2), 173-191. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02601370701219475>

Third, S. (2015). The effects of regular reflective writing on early childhood educators effectiveness in the workplace [Unpublished paper] Masters of Arts – Integrated Studies, Athabasca University.



## 9.4 CONSIDER THIS

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<https://pressbooks.nscc.ca/ecereflectivepractice/?p=129#h5p-11>

Created with Padlet by Sheryl Third

### Reflective Practice



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<https://pressbooks.nscc.ca/ecereflectivepractice/?p=129#h5p-12>



# CHAPTER 10: PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE AND THE CRITICAL REFLECTIVE PROCESS



## 10.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVE

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### Learning Objectives

Utilize critical reflection related to current professional practice.

## 10.2 THE CRITICAL REFLECTIVE PROCESS

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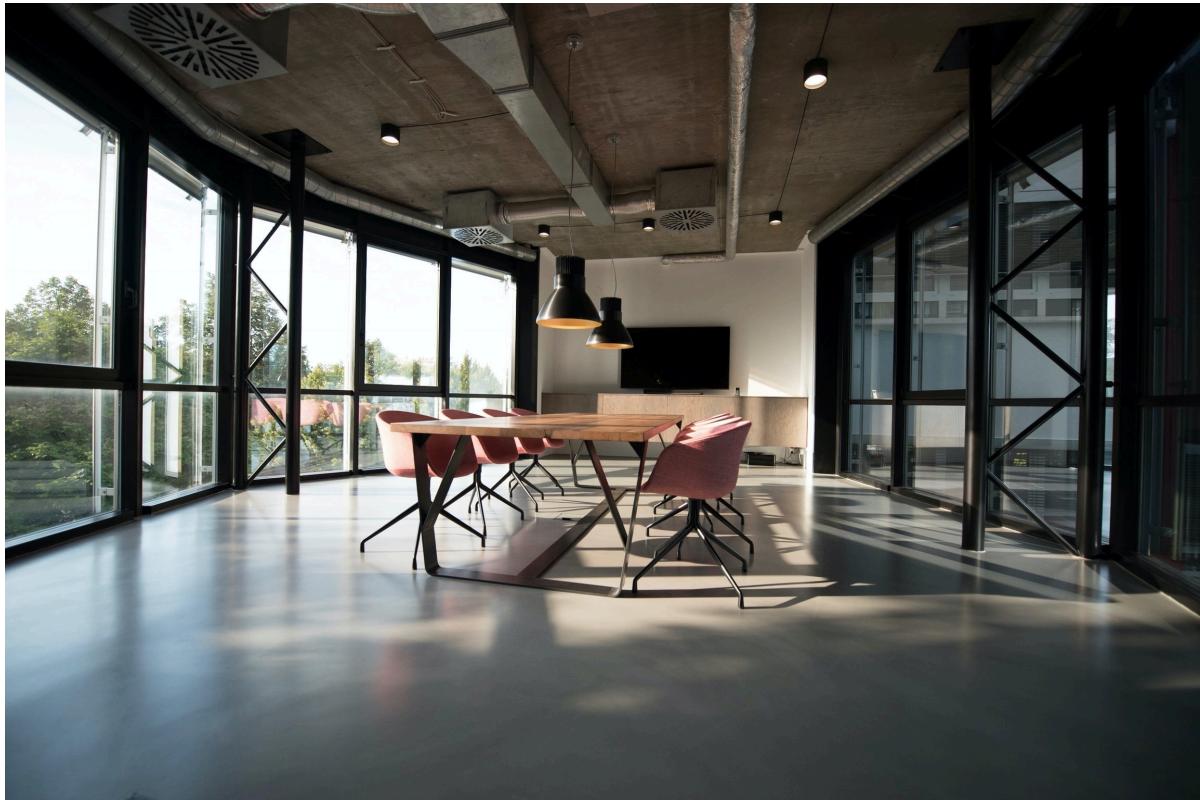


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“Reflection is turning a topic over in various aspects and in various lights so that nothing significant about it shall be overlooked — almost as one might turn a stone over to see what its hidden side is like or what is covered by it.” – *John Dewey (1910)*

## A Taxonomy of Reflection – The Reflective School by Peter Pappas

Review this presentation by Peter Pappas on a Taxonomy of Reflection

### Sources

Dewey, J. (1910). How We Think. Boston: D.C. Heath. <https://doi.org/10.1037/10903-000>

## 10.3 THINKING WITH A PEDAGOGICAL FRIEND OR COLLABORATIVE GROUP

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### Writing Activity

#### Instructions:

Repeating the process from 5.3, but this time with a friend or colleague. Choose one of the

provocations below and one or more of the writing prompts and practice writing and thinking with your community of practice.

## **Provocations:**

Take a look at one or more the following:

“Now Playing” Teaser

In this 9 minute video the viewer will examine why play is valuable to all of us

Mindful Reflection with Dr Leigh Burrows – Edufolios

In this 23 minute podcast the listener will explore how mindful reflection can lead to hearing your authentic voice

Louie Schwartzberg: Nature. Beauty. Gratitude. | TED Talk

In this 9 minute video Louie through his stunning photographs and words has us consider gratefulness

Thinking About Racial Disparities in COVID-19 Impacts

This article by Jack P. Shonkoff, M.D. and David R. Williams, Ph.D. explore the racial disparities of the impact of Covid-19

Reflective Practice Building a Culturally.pdf

This 18 page research paper explores a culturally responsive pedagogical framework

Blog | Early Childhood Pedagogy Network (blog-choose one post that resonates with you)

May I recommend What is Pedagogy? as a place to start

Early Years Study 4 | voicEd (podcasts-choose one )

Each podcast is worth listening to

## **Writing Prompts:**

1. What do you notice about the child/ren? Their face, their demeanor, their competence. What captures your attention from viewing the photo, video or reading the article, how do your ideas differ from others?
2. How do you feel when you are looking at the photo, watching the video or reading? Compare your thoughts with one other person or small group
3. What questions do you have about the content considering the perspective of the child, their

- family, and desired learning outcomes?
4. What delights you as you examine the material and how is this response related to your own values and background? Why is considering what touches your heart important to your practice as an educator?

### Source

Writing prompts adapted from A Thinking Lens for Reflective Teaching used under fair dealing for educational purposes.

Curtis, D., Carter, M. and Pelo, A. (2007). *Learning together with young children: A curriculum framework for reflective teachers*. St. Paul, MN: Redleaf Press.

## 10.4 CONSIDER THIS

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An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:

<https://pressbooks.nscc.ca/ecereflectivepractice/?p=140#h5p-13>

### Read

- Blog Post: 16 Outcomes of Reflection | Stable Transitions

### Reflective Practice



An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:

<https://pressbooks.nscc.ca/ecereflectivepractice/?p=140#h5p-14>



# VERSIONING HISTORY

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This page provides a record of edits and changes made to this book since its initial publication. Whenever edits or updates are made in the text, we provide a record and description of those changes here. If the change is minor, the version number increases by 0.1. If the edits involve a number of changes, the version number increases to the next full number.

The files posted alongside this book always reflect the most recent version.

Version	Date	Change	Affected Web Page
1.0	01 May 2022	First Publication	N/A