

# Reflective Practice

## What is it?

The term reflective practice, refers to learning from experience when observing one's own action, thoughts or feelings; and utilizing these observations in building new understandings.<sup>1</sup> Kolb's reflective model highlights the concept of experiential learning and is centered on the transformation of information into knowledge.<sup>2</sup> Kolb's Learning Cycle which defines learning as the processing of experience, via review, reflection, conceptualization, and experimentation.

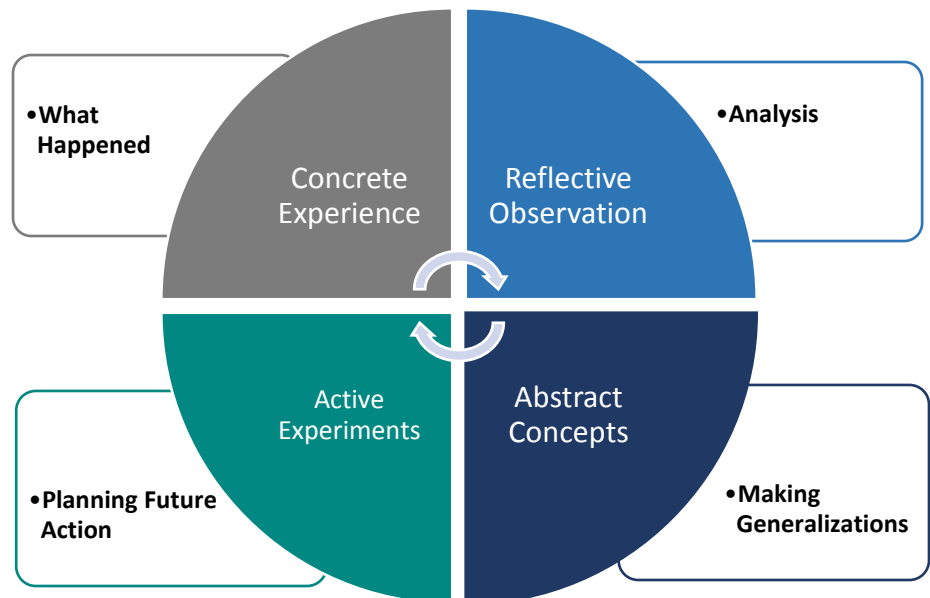


Image replicated [https://www.racp.edu.au/images/dmlImage/StandardImage/Reflection%20Model\\_1\\_40p.jpg](https://www.racp.edu.au/images/dmlImage/StandardImage/Reflection%20Model_1_40p.jpg)

## How do I start?<sup>3</sup>

### Step 1

#### Concrete Experience (What happened and what were the results)

Describe the situation and general reaction with little attempt to uncover personal assumptions or beliefs about the situation. Be as thorough as possible focusing on logical, fact based descriptions, while avoiding emotional input and bias judgment.

### Step 2

#### Reflective Observation (Analysis)

Integrate into the description meaningful reaction into the situation based on assumptions, beliefs, emotions, and the various perceptions or potential viewpoints.

### Step 3

#### Abstract Conceptualization (Making generalizations)

Examine the event described in step 1 and the knowledge, assumptions, emotions, and beliefs identified in step 2. Now, discover new meaning, insights and suggestions for how this experience can impact and inform the future. This synthesis process transforms the experience and observation into new knowledge.<sup>4</sup>

### Step 4

#### Active Experimentation (Formalize a plan and take action)

What will I do differently next time? What learning or professional development do I need to focus on for a better future outcome? Based on the conclusions and recommendations in step 3, try out the new strategy or hypothesis.

<sup>1</sup> R. Puutioa\*, V.-L. Kykyrib and J. Wahlströma. The process and content of advice giving in support of reflective practice in management consulting. *Reflective Practice*. Vol. 10, No. 4, September 2009, 513–528..

<sup>2</sup> Sheilds R.W., D. Aaron, and S. Wall (2001), What is Kolb's model of experiential education, and where does it come from?, Questions and Answers on Adult Education, The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto. Web-page accessed 29 November 2010.[self-published source?]

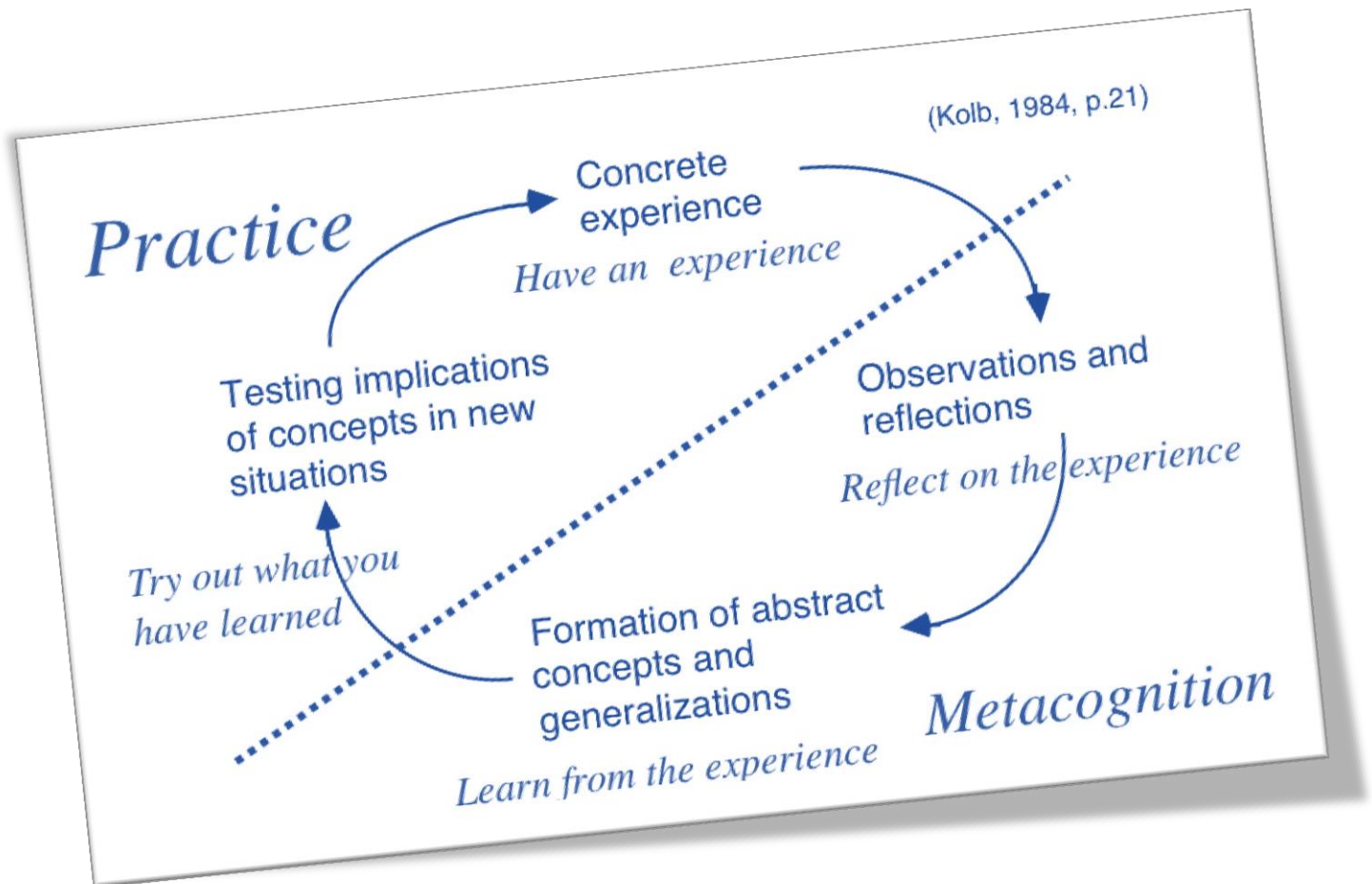
<sup>3</sup> Brookfield 1990, 1995; Mezirow, 1990. Critical Reflection. Retrieved from: <https://natashakenny.wordpress.com/2012/05/>

<sup>4</sup> Sanna Hilden and Kati Tikkamäki. Reflective Practice as a Fuel for Organizational Learning. *Administrative Sciences*. Retrieved from: <http://www.mdpi.com/2076-3387/3/3/76/pdf>

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## Important Tip

- Reflective Practice may be used in conjunction with Lessons Learned and After-Action-Reviews, by sharing the insights gained from self-examination before assessing the situation as a group.



## How can I learn more?

- **Video – The Purpose of Reflective Practice**  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1AfHPV-YBdl>
- **Video – Using Reflective Practice to Accelerate Learning**  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bg0bUUkH0gl>
- **Critical Moments Reflection. MIT**  
<http://www.kstoolkit.org/Critical+Moments>
- **Reflective Practice: An Approach for Expanding Your Learning Frontiers. MIT Open Courseware.**  
<http://ocw.mit.edu/courses/urban-studies-and-planning/11-965-reflective-practice-an-approach-for-expanding-your-learning-frontiers-january-iap-2007/>