

Levels of Reflective Learning

Self-reflective learning through writing: some short notes

The following process is designed as one that can be done solo, though you could have someone else ask you the questions during a friendly discussion.

The structured reflective process proposed here is in contrast to the reflective journaling process sometimes called *flow of consciousness*. Flow of consciousness reflective writing or journaling is where you put your pen on the paper and continue to write. Recording all your thoughts and feeling, tangents and side alleys all. Flow of consciousness writing is very useful for working through half baked ideas, feelings, unclear feelings of unease and the like. Flow of consciousness writing will possibly arise during the second and third loops of reflection proposed in this process. However, in the first instance, you could start with simply completing the single loop in a straightforward manner.

The choosing of what to reflect on and write about can be important. If you are simply practising, then it will not matter so much. However if you have a situation that you would like to work through than take a moment to consider what is important for you. Let me tell you what others have done and you consider what might work best for you. Many people begin by looking at an interpersonal work situation that is unresolved and they would like to understand. This could be one where they have felt misunderstood or ignored or one where the other person(s) have felt misunderstood or ignored. It could be one where there was 'conflict' or alternatively there was no conflict and there should have been. Many people use a particular situation rather than a general one. This means that general scenarios are not so successful with this process, and the more particular the better. Some people relate to family situations, both present and past. Some people relate to future situations and wonder about their present concerns and worries and what bring this about.

In this process we have included the question "What am I learning?" because it is generally worthwhile to ask this question. It is also a question rarely asked.

If you find yourself wandering, allow yourself the luxury of continuing to write as you do so.

If at any time you find yourself responding with "Because that is the right/best/obvious/correct thing to do, then realise that you have a bit more work to do in order to work out why you might see it that way.

It is worth remembering that sometimes when you go through this kind of process you end up more confirmed in your opinion or conclusion. This is also a good outcome, if you have done the process truthfully, because it is a way to objectify your rather subjective thoughts and ways of feeling and seeing the world.

Sometimes you can use the second and third loops as a way to make more sense of what you have already written, say in a journal, a diary or other written process.

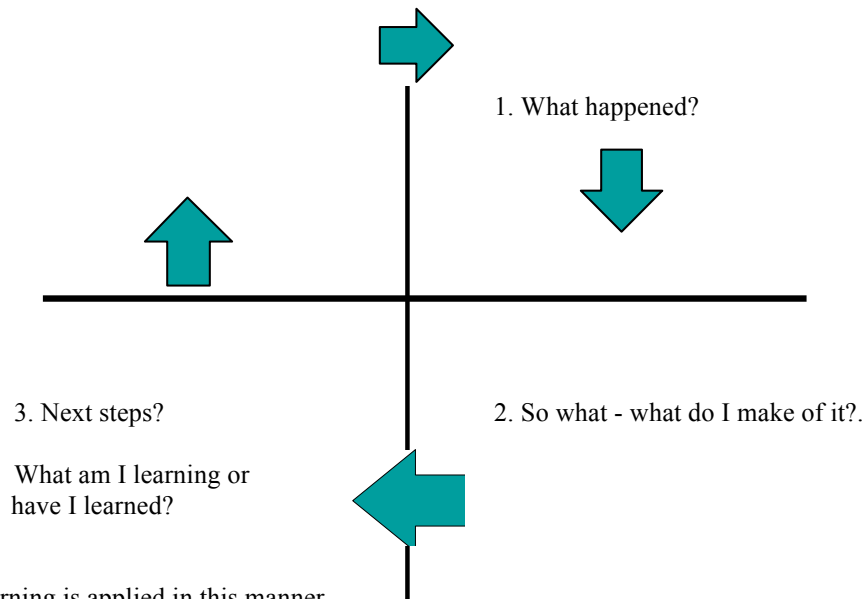
Happy reflecting.

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Levels or loops of Reflection

The following is a short description of a model of self reflective learning. This work builds onto the previous work of David Kolb, as well as Richard Bowden, recently from Hawkesbury University.

Single loop learning: This is taking the Kolb model and applying in a simple fashion.



Single Loop Learning is applied in this manner.

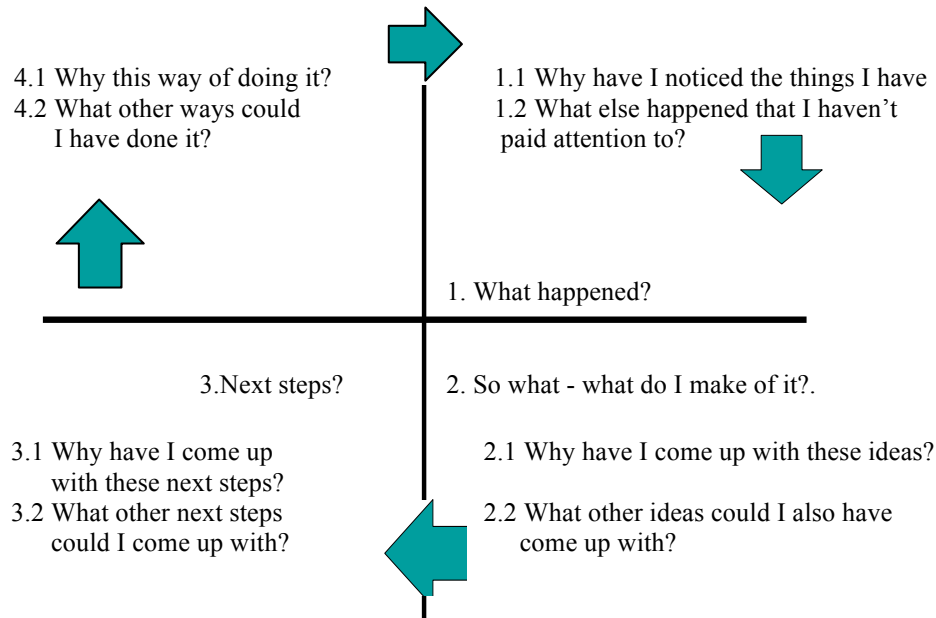
1. What happened - in terms of the situation you are wishing to learn from. In each case there is a decision about what to focus on. Simply write out your version of events or your thoughts about the situation.
2. So what - what do you make of it - what are the ideas that are stimulated, or what is the arena of interest here for you. If you want to make an analysis this is the time.

What am I learning - this is a good question to ask at any point but is usually very useful right here. The learning could be about you, other people, your teaching methods, management methods, your responses to certain situations, certain ideas, etc.

3. What are your next steps - in terms of the next time you see a similar situation, or the next time you are in the situation or how you might work with someone else.

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Double Loop Learning - sometimes known as meta-learning - or “How do I come to learn this?”



Double Loop Learning can be applied in the following manner.

Looking at what you single loop responses were. Simply ask yourself the following questions.

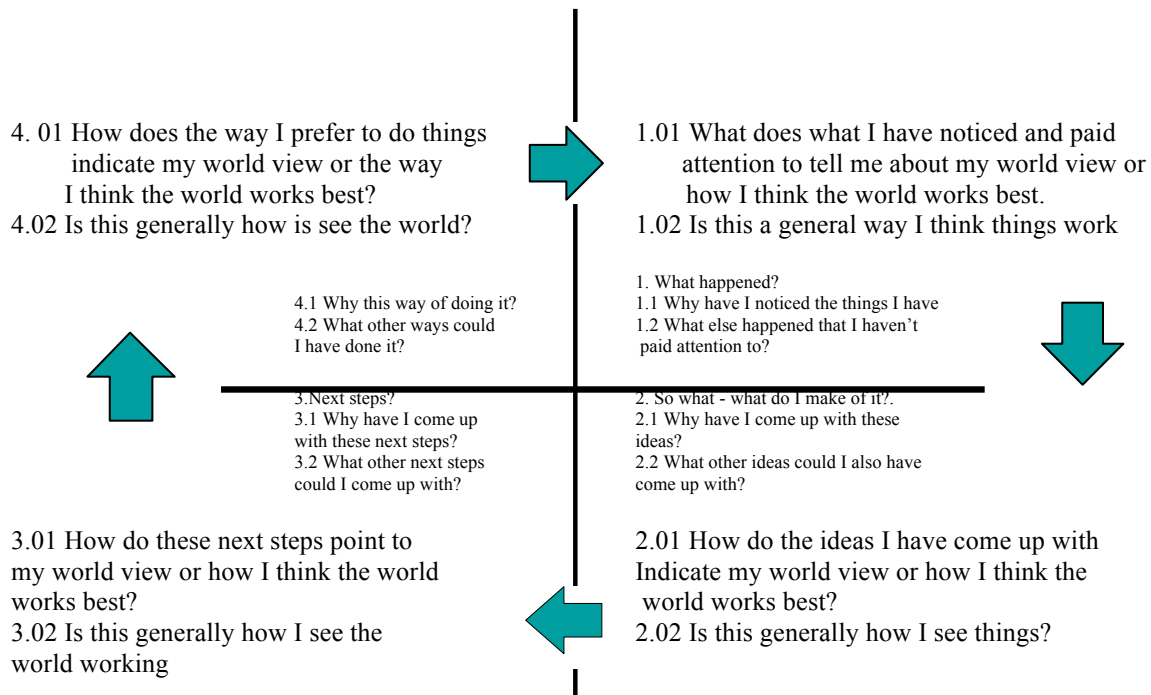
- 1.1) Why have I noticed these things/ Being careful not to answer with some version of “Because that is what is important!” or “Because that is obvious. Duh!”
- 1.2) What else happened that I haven't paid attention to? Spend more than a nano-second here. This is easiest for diverger's in Kolb's model - hardest for converger's.
- 2.1) Why have I come up with these ideas? Once again see if you can answer more then “Because they are the right ones or the obvious ones, Duh!”
- 2.2) What other ideas could I also have come up with? Some will be obvious and some will not be. Once you let them come they will start to flow. This is easiest for assimilators in Kolb's model and hardest for accommodators.
- 3.1) Why have I come up with these next steps? Allow yourself time to consider other ones.
- 3.2) What other next steps could I come up with? If you find you are unable to even consider others then you might have “one right answer” disease - you might also be a converger in Kolb's model. While developing next steps is easiest for convergers developing many next steps is hardest for them. Developing any next steps is toughest for divergers.
- 4.1) Why this way of doing it - either having done it or doing it in the future? So any next step will have a way of it being done for you. Why do you do the doing of it in this

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way?

- 4.2) What other ways could I have done it/do it. Accommodators will find this bit the easiest as they can develop new strategies easily. Assimilators will have the most problem because they will want more data or more time.

Triple Loop Learning - also called epistemic learning - or what is the origin of both what you know and how you have come to know it.



Triple Loop Learning can be applied in the following manner.

Once again looking at what you double and single loop responses were. Ask yourself the following questions.

Now these questions are ones that often need to roll around inside you for a few minutes. A worldview can be expressed as rules, or stories, or metaphors, or value, or 'how things should work around here'.

These questions are related to your previous writing and are all similar in purpose. When you get to see you world view then you can begin to see whether that is consciously what you want or not. It tends to unearth your lived values rather than only your espoused values or the values you believe you have. Chris Argyris calls these your values in action as against your espoused values. When you really see some of these values in your writing then you can become more of a creator in your own life.

1.01 What does what I have noticed and paid attention to tell me about my worldview or how I think the world works best?

1.02 Is this a general way I think things work

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2.01 How do the ideas I have come up with indicate my worldview or how I think the world works best?

2.02 Is this generally how I see things?

3.01 How do these next steps point to my worldview or how I think the world works best?

3.02 Is this generally how I see the world working?

4.01 How does the way I prefer to do things indicate my worldview or the way I think the world works best?

4.02 Is this generally how I see the world?

You may not get very much further than one or two of these questions. They usually provoke further questions. Usually there is similarity or congruence between each of the worldviews from each quadrant.

Sometime it is worthwhile asking these questions with a friend or colleague who can assist your learning. Small teams or groups of people as a review of a situation can do the same process - this can be done in order to clarify the different responses to a situation, which could seem similar.