The development of reflective self-assessment via portfolio

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What is reflection?

- “....consciously thinking about and analysing what one has done or is doing....”
  (Learning Development Unit, LJMU, 2004)
- An essential part of Kolb’s learning cycle
  (Kolb, 1984)
Reflection as a key skill for the professions

- Graduates.. must be able to:
  - Reflect on practice, be self-critical....
    (The New Doctor, GMC Jan 05, Tomorrow’s Doctors, GMC Feb 03)

- Learning opportunities and experiences should.... encourage a questioning.....self-critical approach to ...practice
  (The First Five Years, 2nd ed, GDC Aug 02)

- The new veterinary graduate should be able to ...develop a capacity for self-audit
  (RCVS Day One Skills, Jul 02)
Cycle of Reflection
(Gibbs 1988)

DESCRIBE
ACTION PLAN
EVALUATE
CONCLUDE
ANALYSE
Reflection in Action

- **Describe** What happened? How do you feel about it?
- **Evaluate** Was it good or bad?
- **Analyse** What have you learned? What else could you have done?
- **Conclude** How will you introduce this to your performance? What difficulties might you encounter?
- **Action Plan** How will you use this? What further knowledge/skills do you need?
Reflective practice

- Bridges the gap between theory and practice
- Allows understanding of individual’s thinking, and influences learning
- Identifies and records progression
- Looks beyond academic accomplishments
- Is essential for any professional!
Links with experiential learning

- Experiential learning................ "direct encounter with the phenomena being studied rather than merely thinking about the encounter, or only considering the possibility of doing something about it" (Borzak, 1981, in Brookfield, 1983)
Communication skills assessment

- Focus on reflective ability rather than level of skills demonstrated
- Fairer assessment in view of limited training?
- Development of a key professional skill
Components of reflective portfolio

- Evaluation of two consultations seen while on EMS
- Self-reflection - two consultations, one in 3rd year and one in 4th/5th year
Formative assessment

- Seminars on video assessment in 2nd year
- Group evaluation in 3rd year
- Submission of 3rd year self-evaluation for feedback
- Self-assessment during video replay in 4th/5th year
But how can we teach reflection?

- Provide examples
- Give appropriate feedback on reflective evaluations
- Differentiate between description, evaluation and the whole reflective cycle
Example 1 (4th year)

- “I tried to get the client to understand that her dog’s injuries were very severe and beyond the bounds of realistic medical help……. (descriptive)
- “I consider that I broached this subject in a reasonably sympathetic way, there isn’t really a nice way to say it! I didn’t realise at the time that legally you don’t actually need a signed consent form, had I known this I wouldn’t have included this ....” (reflective? – feedback should differentiate)
Example 2 (4th year)

“I thought maybe I was making Mr Stockley feel too guilty with my “I like to treat animals” comment. However I felt it was necessary to make it clear to Mr Stockley, that I wasn’t very impressed with the idea. I emphasized the fact that it was his decision, mainly as it was not a decision I wanted to make and to ease my conscience a little” (reflective)
Example 3 (4th year)

- "I didn’t feel that I managed to alleviate any of his worries because I couldn’t fully appreciate his perspective on the situation. I’ve learnt that coming to a conclusion that the client is clearly happy with may take a long time but is definitely worth it in the end because it is really important to share the decision making process. This can only be done with a full understanding of the client’s perspective" (reflective)
Example 4 (3rd year)

- “The vet then went on to introduce me (the veterinary student) to the client, and checked with him that my presence during the consultation was not against his wishes. Although this was good for the vet to check, some clients may feel that they are unable to object to a student’s presence, when the student is already in the room. The vet should have therefore probably checked with the owner before entering the consultation room.” (descriptive with some reflection)
Example 5 – 4th year

- “I should illustrate more clearly and thoroughly what is going on and be able to explain exactly how the treatment works. I still talk too fast and give information in no particular order... (reflective)

- I did try to reassure the client, but I really should have listened to her story concerning her mother’s horse. I picked up on the fact that this was why she was excessively worried, but might have shown more empathy.” (reflective)
So are we encouraging reflection?

- Some students have natural reflective ability
- Some need to be trained, via examples of reflective essays
The result of this approach?

Hopefully..........

- Lifelong reflective practitioners
  NOT JUST in communication skills, but in all areas of practice
- Better professionals