

# The Significance of Reflection in Education

Understanding Restorative Practices as a  
Cooperative Reflection Process

**Eriko Yamabe**

PhD Student at the University of Tokyo

Part-time Lecturer at Saitama Prefectural University

yamabe.eriko@gmail.com

# What is Reflection?

“Reflection is the instrument by which experiences are translated into dynamic knowledge”

- Korthagen, F. (2001)

“Reflection is a meaning-making process that moves a learner from one’s experience into the next with deeper understanding of its relationships with and connections to other experiences and ideas... It is a means to essentially moral ends.” – Rodger, C. (2002)

Reflection fosters: analytical thinking, appreciation of social and political contexts, development of theories, etc.



# What is Reflection?

Experience



Reflection



Learning

It is about **learning from experience**, and **developing your own thoughts** from the experiences.

While it is a natural process we often take unconsciously, we also try to facilitate reflection consciously, both in ourselves in others, by **asking questions**.

# Is it strange to see RP as a reflection process?

- Restorative Questions  
(for the person whose behavior caused the problem)
  - What happened?
  - What were you thinking about at the time?
  - What have you thought about since?
  - Who has been affected by what you have done?  
In what way?
  - What do you think you need to do to make things right?

# Is it strange to see RP as a reflection process?

- Restorative Questions  
(for who has been affected)
  - What did you think when you realized what had happened?
  - What impact has this incident had on you and others?
  - What has been the hardest thing for you?
  - What do you think needs to happen to make things right?

- Wachtel, T. (2013)

# Is it strange to see RP as a reflection process?

- In the terms of reflection, restorative questions help us to:
  - Reflect on what happened
  - Reflect on your thoughts
  - Reflect on how the incident affected you and your feelings
  - Learn who were affected by the incident and how
  - Reflect on your needs
  - Learn how to make things right

# Is it strange to see RP as a reflection process?

## Zero Tolerance Policies (Retributive Lenses)

- violation of rules
- punishment as consequence
- punishment according to fixed standards
- lecturing and punishing by adults in third position

**Offers no reflection, and no learning opportunities**

- **(answer is 'obvious' in the light of logic)**

## Restorative Practices (Restorative Lenses)

- violation of relationships (trust)
- effort to make things right as consequence
- think out together what has be made right and how (no fixed standards)

**Offers reflective learning opportunities**

- **(gives voice to all, because perspectives matter)**

So why not try explaining  
the significance of RP by  
defining it as a cooperative  
process of reflection?

...

= My basic Research Question



# Very Brief History of Arguments on Reflection

- How has it been argued about the importance and effect of reflection?
- How were reflection defined?
- What educational models and approaches were designed to promote learners' reflections?
- What are the key elements of reflection?

# Very Brief History of Arguments on Reflection

## I. René Decartes (1596-1650)

-purpose of reflection (in his terms, meditation) is to prove the existence of God

-process of reflection is mainly featured by  
(a) separating truth from non-existence/false,  
(b) with the use of **logic** (rational thinking),  
(c) by first breaking down every assumptions, and building a theory only with what is proven to be true (“I think therefore I am”)

# Very Brief History of Arguments on Reflection

## I. René Decartes (1596-1650)

“I shall be very happy to show the paths I have followed, and to set forth my life as in a picture, so that everyone may judge of it for himself”

“Thus my design is not here to teach the Method which everyone should follow in order to promote the good conduct of his Reason, but only to show in what manner I have endeavoured to conduct my own.”

- Decartes, R. (1641)

The reflection process is logical and individual, yet Decartes assumes “others” to judge his reflective process  
(reflections do not lead to one universal answer)

# Very Brief History of Arguments on Reflection

## II. John Dewey (1859-1952)

-“reflection” ≡ “thought”

(reflection is one of the four modes of thinking. The other three are (1) belief, (2) imagination, and (3) stream of consciousness.)

“No experience having a meaning is possible without some element of thought.”

– Dewey, J. (1916)

-purpose of reflection is to discover connection between cause and effect, which makes our foresights more accurate and comprehensive.

-process of reflection is the method of trial and error

# Very Brief History of Arguments on Reflection

## II. John Dewey

General features of a reflective experience:

- ↓ (i) Perplexity, confusion, doubt [**experience**]
- ↓ (ii) Tentative interpretation of the elements [**data**]
- ↓ (iii) Careful survey of all attainable consideration which will define and clarify the problem in hand [**explanations, ideas**]
- ↓ (iv) Consequent elaboration of the tentative hypothesis to make it more precise and more consistent [**anticipation of solutions**]
- ↓ (v) Taking one stand upon the projected hypothesis as a plan of action which is applied to the existing state of affairs [**trial**]

Starting from the phase of knowing nothing, you gather and organize trustful information, and think out of a prospective plan of action, and give it a try. ⇒ **An endless pragmatic learning process.**

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# Very Brief History of Arguments on Reflection

## III. Donald Shön (1930-1997)

-Questions if actual practices are logical

-Focus on “**reflection-in-action**”,  
the purpose of which is to enable persons to  
effectively use their tacit knowledge in practice,  
or improvise, in the here and now.  
The process is extremely short.

“When a problematic situation is uncertain, technical problem-solving depends on the prior construction of a well-formed problem –which is not itself a technical task. When a practitioner recognizes a situation as unique, she cannot handle it solely by applying theories or techniques derived from her store of professional knowledge.”

-Shön, D. (1987)

# Very Brief History of Arguments on Reflection

## III. Donald Schön

- Also questions, how we know what to reflect on (“finding the elephant in the room”)
- Shifts “reflection for problem-solving” to “**reflection for problem-setting**”

“in situations of value conflict, there are no clear and self-consistent ends to guide the technical selection of means”  
-Schön, D. (1987)

- The process of problem-setting reflection is more **artistic** than logical/experimental

“It is no accident that professionals often refer to an “art” of teaching or management and use the term *artist* to refer to practitioners unusually adept at handling situations of uncertainty, uniqueness, and conflict.”

# Very Brief History of Arguments on Reflection

## IV. Fred A. J. Korthagen

- Considers that we can learn to reflect-in-action, by getting used to reflect-on-action effectively and appropriately.

- Purpose of reflection is to make self-directed learners with a growth competence

- Develops a model of the process of successful reflection (ALACT model), and designs tools for practicing effective reflection:



# Very Brief History of Arguments on Reflection

IV. Fred A. J. Korthagen

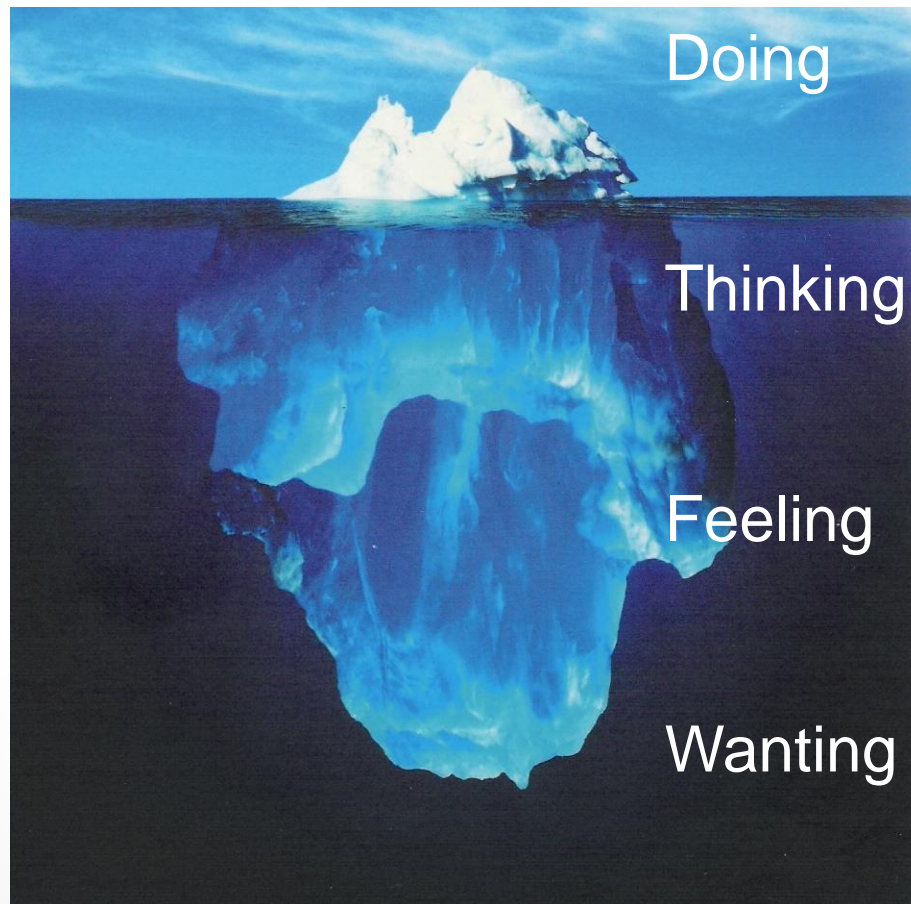
How can we **successfully** go from Phase 2 to Phase 3?



ALACT Model  
(Korthagen, F.)

# Very Brief History of Arguments on Reflection

## IV. Fred A. J. Korthagen



Iceberg Model  
(Korthagen, F.)

# Very Brief History of Arguments on Reflection

## IV. Fred A. J. Korthagen

1. What did I think? (What am I thinking?)	5. What did they think? (What are they thinking?)
2. How did I feel? (How am I feeling?)	6. How did they feel? (How are they feeling?)
3. What did I want? (What am I wanting?)	7. What did they want? (What are they wanting?)
4. What did I do? (What am I doing?)	8. What did they do? (What are they doing?)

# Very Brief History of Arguments on Reflection

- So, what were the key elements of reflection?
  - Logic + tacit knowledge ( $\hat{=}$  understanding of feelings and wantings in the here and now)
  - Others, to evaluate or relativize your reflection
  - Continuing attempts of trial
  - the art of problem-setting
  - Comprehensiveness; thinking, feeling, wanting, and doing

# What RP Can Learn from Reflection Studies

- We may adopt the models and frameworks past studies on reflection has developed...

(a) to **build an even stronger framework** in the methods of restorative practices (e.g. designing more restorative questions),

(b) to **open up new explanations on the significance of restorative practices** (e.g. self-direct learning, fostering understandings in one's own values)

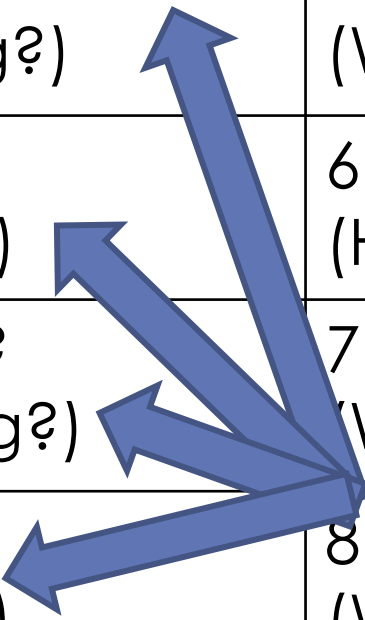


# What RP Can Learn from Reflection Studies

- The restorative questions help us to:
  - Reflect on what happened **Doing (of others)**
  - Reflect on your thoughts **Thinking**
  - Reflect on how the incident affected you and your feelings **Feeling**
  - Learn who were affected by the incident and how **Feelings of others**
  - Reflect on your needs **Wanting**
  - Learn how to make things right **Doing**

# What RP Can Learn from Reflection Studies

1. What did I think? (What am I thinking?)	5. What did they think? (What are they thinking?)
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# What RP Has to Offer to the Reflection Studies

- RP has its uniqueness in the **cooperative process of reflection**. Restorative conferences, restorative circles, more informal modes of restorative dialogues, and the methods used in these dialogues (e.g. talking piece) may be developed as a model of cooperative reflection.
- RP is a more **humble approach to reflection**, regarding the fact that it emphasizes taking time to actually listen to the voices of each other, and not just assume.



# What RP Has to Offer to the Reflection Studies

- RP focuses on facilitating reflection among children and youths, while most of the reflection studies focuses on adults. RP may provide **evidence that children, too, can reflect**, and not only that but **they can also facilitate reflection** in others, when appropriately trained.

Thank you so much for  
listening.

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Eriko Yamabe  
yamabe.eriko@gmail.com

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