A Reflective Practice Approach to Professional Development: The “reflective practicum.”

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My Plan

- My goals/hopes
- Introductions
- Public agreements
- Some key ideas about *Reflecting on our practice*
- “Final warning case” – Professor Pierre and Sam
- Theory–of–action approach to RP
- Mutual Learning Model
- Cases (mine, yours)
- Learning more
- Feedback
You will leave the session with:

- A framework for reflecting on your practice
- A way to analyze difficult interpersonal problems
- Some practice in applying these ideas
- Some resources to continue learning
- Thinking this was enjoyable and
- worth the time/effort
Achieving our goals without creating any undesirable consequences

- Technical competence
- Interpersonal competence
Everyone reflects!

- We have theories of action
  - *Lots of theories, about everything*
- We reflect *in action*
  - *Frame → Actions → Consequences*
- We reflect *on our actions*
  - *Particularly when things don’t go we intend*
Professional Problem Solving – Reflection-in-Action

**FRAME** the problem

**ACT** to solve the problem

Monitor the **CONSEQUENCES**

*(Donald Schön and Chris Argyris)*
Reflection *on* Reflection–*in*–Action

**Reflect on**

*How are you thinking in order to act as you do?*

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**Reflection–in–Action**
Theories of action

Espoused theory

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Theory-in-use → Action → Consequences


“Final Warning” Case

**Background:** Professor Pierre has talked to student Sam, in order to help Sam improve his performance. Pierre wants to keep Sam in the department and to help Sam succeed, but this is Sam’s final warning. If there is no improvement Pierre will have to remove/fail Sam.

Here is a transcript of Pierre’s statements to Sam. These sentences represent the range of meaning that Pierre communicated to Sam.
1. Sam, your performance is not up to standard (and moreover...)
2. You seem to be carrying a chip on your shoulder.
3. It appears to me that this has affected your performance in a number of ways. You seem *uncommitted and completely disorganized*.
4. People in my department cannot have those characteristics.
5. Let’s discuss your feelings about your performance.
6. Sam, I know you want to talk about the injustices that you believe have been perpetrated on you in the past. I do not want to spend a lot of time discussing something that happened several months ago. Nothing constructive will come of it. It’s behind us.
7. I want to talk to you today about your future in the department/organization.
“Final Warning” Case

Discuss with the person beside you:

How well do you think Pierre dealt with Sam?

You have about 5 minutes, and
Then I will collect some of your responses
WORDS/Names

Theoretical Models
- Model I – Model II
- Unilateral Control – Mutual Learning

Some Names
- Chris Argyris
- Donald Schon
- Roger Schwarz
- Robert Kegan
Model building

Theory-in-use → Action → Behavioral World

Mindset: Values & Assumptions → Behaviors → Consequences
The Big Picture

Unilateral Control Model

Mutual Learning Model

??

Your case study

New thinking and acting
The Big Picture

Unilateral Control Model

Values:
- Control; Win don’t lose
- Avoid negative emotion
- Be rational

Strategies:
- Evaluations/attributions not tested
- Information withheld
- High level of abstraction

Consequences:
- Misunderstanding; Mistrust
- Little learning/change

Your case study
## Unilateral Control Model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core values and Assumption</th>
<th>Strategies</th>
<th>Consequences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>■ Achieve my goal through unilateral control</td>
<td>■ I understand the situation; those who see it different do not</td>
<td>■ Misunderstanding, conflict, and defensiveness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ Win, don’t lose</td>
<td>■ I am right; those who disagree are wrong</td>
<td>■ Mistrust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ Minimize expressing negative feelings</td>
<td>■ I have pure motives; those who disagree have questionable motives</td>
<td>■ Self-fulfilling, self-sealing processes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ Act rationally</td>
<td>■ My feelings are justified</td>
<td>■ Limited learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>■ Advocate my position</td>
<td>■ Reduced effectiveness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>■ Keep my reasoning private</td>
<td>■ Reduced quality of work life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>■ Don’t ask others about their reasoning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>■ Ease-in</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>■ Save face</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As a form of problem solving

Effective problem solving
- Problem is solved
- Stays solved
- Relationships not harmed

- *Consistent with your values & beliefs*
Effective Problem Solving?

Requires behaviors that:

- Generate valid information
- Promote free & informed choice and
- Commitment to monitor outcomes

Do you agree?
## Mutual Learning Model

### Core values and Assumption

- Transparency
- Curiosity
- Accountability
- Informed choice
- Compassion

- I have some information, others have information
- Each of us may see things the others do not
- I may be contributing to the difficulty
- Differences are opportunities for learning
- People may disagree with me and have pure motives
- People’s choices make sense to them
- People are more committed when they make informed choices

### Strategies

1. State your views and ask for others’ views
2. Share all relevant information
3. Use specific examples and agree on important words
4. Explain reasoning and intent
5. Test assumptions and inferences
6. Jointly design next steps
7. Focus interests, not positions
8. Discuss undiscussable issues
9. Use a decision-making rule that generates the level of commitment needed

### Consequences

- Increased quality of decisions
  - Innovative solutions
  - Cost savings
- Increased commitment
  - Follow through on decisions
  - Solutions that stick
- Shorter implementation time
- Improved working relationships
  - More trust
  - Less defensiveness
  - Less ineffective conflict
- Improved personal satisfaction
  - Increased growth and development
  - Less stress
- Increased learning
  - Greater understanding
  - Embracing and learning from mistakes
  - Greater adaptability
  - Appropriate dependence on others
The Ladder of Inference: *The way the mind works*

- Available data
- Select data
- Make assumptions
- Add meaning
- Draw conclusions
- Take Action
Ladder of Inference:
*Helps people identify what information or facts are used as the basis of their reasoning process*

- An improved reasoning process
- Greater utilization of diverse thinking
- Minimized point–counterpoint conversations
- Greater confidence in information used to make decisions
Your cases

- “Classic” format
  - Important problem (you’re stuck)
  - Steps taken
  - Dialogue, plus LHC
  - Help?
- Mini–cases
Instructions for Writing a Case

1. Identify an important problem that you have tried to solve or will try to solve in the near future.
2. Describe the steps you took (or plan to take) to resolve the problem.
3. Divide the next several pages in half. In the right hand column, write the conversation as you can best recollect it. Begin with what you said, what the other(s) said, what you said, etc.

| What I thought or felt but did not say | What I and other(s) actually said |

4. Briefly state what, if anything, puzzles you or stands out for you as you think back on the encounter.
5. What specific help would you like?

Adapted from C. Argyris
More information on the table
Honest discussion of issues (fewer hidden agendas)
Minimized emotional volatility
Suspension of judgment
Healthy mistrust of one’s own thinking
Identification of unchecked assumptions
A mini-case:

Take a moment to:
- Identify a recent difficult (interpersonal) situation
- What did you say?
- What did the other person say?
- What were you thinking/feeling that you didn’t say?
- Jot down a few notes to remind you of this situation – you don’t have to share them
Let’s look at a case

Is the case writer:

- Transparent?
- Curious?
- Sharing responsibility/accountability?
- Making informed choices?
- Compassionate?

What might she/he say/do?
Let’s look at a case

Is the case writer:
- Stating her views and asking genuine questions?
- Sharing all relevant information?
- Using specific examples & agreeing on what important words mean?
- Explaining her reasoning and intent?
- Testing assumptions and inferences?
- Jointly designing next steps?
- Focusing on interests, not positions?
- Discussing undiscussable issues?

What might she/he say/do?
Silence and its consequences

When I silence myself (or others), there is

- Little new information
- Little learning
- Little change
- Possible misunderstanding
- Self–referential logic (self–sealing)
- Self–fulfilling
Emotions

- Are important data
- Provide direction for our attention
- Direct us to how we are thinking
- Are often way up the ladder
- May be based on assumptions that haven’t been tested
- Can lead to our silencing ourselves
Advocacy: the ladder of inference in action (making your ladder visible)

- Ideas that remain agile and innovative
- Increased levels of shared understanding for goals, ideas, & plans
- Clear, more compelling communication

Inquiry: the skill of asking questions to discover more information in other’s views or to invite challenge to one’s own viewpoint

- Faster discovery and correction of errors
- The ability to draw more information form another’s perspective
- Broader group learning through the surfacing of diverse perspectives
Questions? Comments?
Next Steps: keeping the learning going?

- Write up your own case
- Analyze it
- Talk with a “friend”
- Read more:
  - Articles and books
    - “The Skilled Facilitator Fieldbook: Tips, Tools, and Tested Methods for Consultants, Facilitators, Managers, Trainers, and Coaches” Roger Schwarz, Anne Davidson, Peg Carlson and Sue McKinney
  - On the web:
    - http://www.schwarzassociates.com/
References


References


