

Journal of Scholarly Engagement
Reflective Practice: Guidelines for Authors

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Purpose

The purpose of this guide is to provide potential authors with an outline of requirements that must be met to write a reflective practice article for the Journal of Scholarly Engagement (JSE). The focus of JSE is on faculty applying and integrating disciplinary knowledge in various scholarly activities (e.g., scholarly engagement in university activities and initiatives, local community involvement, and work with other organizations). Reflective practice is one way to analyze and evaluate such scholarly activities. There are many prominent theories on reflective practice, including from John Dewey (Education, Psychology, and Philosophy), Donald Schon (Design and Management), Graham Gibbs (Education), Christopher Johns (Nursing), and Stephen Brookfield (Adult Education). Finlay (2008) stated in a general sense, “reflective practice is understood as the process of learning through and from experience towards gaining new insights of self and/or practice” (p. 1). In this way, reflective practice provides practitioners with an opportunity to understand practical problems in more detail and relate this deeper understanding to larger issues within their discipline. As such, reflective practice manuscripts are more than just opinion or a review of literature.

This guide was created by synthesizing some of the seminal thinking on reflective practice (see Dewey, 1933/1989; Schön, 1983). For purposes of JSE, rigorous reflective practice involves identifying a problem (unexpected or unknown outcome) within the scope of a practical activity or project, exploring a deeper understanding of the context and participants in the activity or project, proposing reasons to explain the problem, evaluating the reasons with evidence (such as from models, theories, scholarly literature, and/or analyzed data), choosing the most plausible explanation of the problem based upon practical experience and the evaluated evidence, and engaging in a reflective critique of the activity of reflection. There are two general audiences for reflective practice manuscripts. First, other practitioners could benefit from learning about the tacit assumptions involved in practical decision making within a given professional

field. Second, the broader scholarly community could benefit from the “exploratory” nature of such manuscripts, as they could provide viable starting points for empirical research.

The following table includes detailed information about the approximate page length for required sections, section headings, and suggested content for each section for reflective practice articles. Page length will vary, but roughly the recommended range is between 15 pages and 30 pages double-spaced, in addition to references. References of a scholarly nature are required to support general claims in the manuscript, but due to the emphasis on practical knowledge, first person singular (“I”) and plural (“We”) are acceptable in many of the sections of the manuscript. Lastly, authors should follow APA style to format their manuscripts.

Length*	Section	Guidelines
1 paragraph	Abstract	Provide an abstract 150 to 250 words in length that describes the scope of your article (written last).
1-2 pages	Statement of Problem	<p>Overview: Describe what was unexpected or unknown about the activity/project.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a brief introduction to the activity/project. • Describe what was unexpected or unknown about the activity/project (e.g., what prompted the inquiry).
1-2 pages	Statement of Purpose	<p>Overview: Describe the reason for the reflection about the activity/project.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe the general approach (conceptual lens) to reflective practice utilized for this study (e.g., general steps taken and/or theories used to guide/frame the reflection, such as the approaches of John Dewey, Donald Schon, David Kolb, Jack Mezirow, Graham Gibbs, Christopher Johns, Stephen Brookfield, etc.) and the intended outcome.
2-5 pages	Activity/Project Description	<p>Overview: Describe the details or facts about the activity/project.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe the general details of the activity/project (including the participants and context). • Describe in-depth the situational thinking and decisions (reflection-in-action) that occurred throughout the activity/project that could have contributed to the outcome.
1-2 pages	Reasons for the Problem	<p>Overview: Propose ideas for what might have contributed to what was unexpected or unknown about the activity/project.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Propose ideas for what might have contributed to what was unexpected or unknown about the activity/project. • Differentiate the ideas (describe how the ideas are different).
2-5 pages	Evaluation of Reasons for the Problem	<p>Overview: Reason through and evaluate these ideas by comparing them to alternative explanations, scientific theories, and scholarly evidence.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compare the ideas to identify the strengths and weaknesses of each proposed reason. • Provide theories, models, and/or scholarly literature to support this evaluation.
2-3 pages	Decision	<p>Overview: Based upon the evaluation of proposed explanations, describe the most plausible explanation for what was unexpected or unknown about the activity/project.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make a judgment (decision) about the most plausible explanation for what was unexpected or unknown about the activity/project, and reiterate why you made this choice. • Consider providing a decision tree or summary of the process taken to arrive at your decision (potentially providing tables or figures to show this process).
2-5 pages	Reflective Critique	<p>Overview: Provide a critique of the reflective practice itself.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe how this reflection informs your decision making about the current and future state of the activity/project. • Describe how this reflection could inform other practitioners/researchers with similar activities/projects. • Propose one or more directions/recommendations for future inquiry about this or similar activities/projects that practitioners/researchers could use to inquire about the topic.
Unlimited	Reference list	Provide a reference list.**

* Length refers to double spaced text in Times New Roman, 12 pt font. Listed page ranges are only recommendations. Section length for actual manuscripts may vary.

** APA style is required for the entire manuscript.

List of Useful Sources on Reflective Practice

General Theories

- Brown, M. J. (2012). John Dewey's logic of science. *HOPOS: The Journal of the International Society for the History of Philosophy of Science*, 2(2), 258-306.
- Dewey, J. (1989). How we think. In Jo Ann Boydston (Ed.), *The later works of John Dewey, 1825-1953, Volume 8: 1933, Essays and How we think, Revised edition*. Carbondale and Edwardsville, IL: Southern Illinois University Press.
- Gibbs, G. (1988). *Learning by doing, A guide to teaching and learning methods*. Oxford, UK: Oxford Polytechnic.
- Johns, C. (2005). Balancing the winds. *Reflective Practice*, 6(1), 67-84.
- Kolb, D. A. (1984). *Experiential learning: Experience as the source of learning and development*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall.
- Mezirow, J. (1981). A critical theory of adult learning and education. *Adult Education*, 32(1), 3-24.
- Rodgers, C. (2002). Defining reflection: Another look at John Dewey and reflective thinking. *Teachers College Record*, 104(4), 842-866.
- Schön, D. A. (1983). *The reflective practitioner: How professionals think in action*. New York, NY: Basic Books.
- Van Manen, M. (1995). On the epistemology of reflective practice. *Teachers and Teaching*, 1(1), 33-50.

Business Literature

- Hilden, S., & Tikkamäki, K. (2013). Reflective practice as a fuel for organizational learning. *Administrative Sciences*, 3(3), 76-95.
- Rigg, C., & Trehan, K. (2008). Critical reflection in the workplace: Is it just too difficult? *Journal of European Industrial Training*, 32(5), 374-384.
- Vince, R. (2002). Organizing reflection. *Management Learning*, 33(1), 63-78.
- Yanow, D., & Tsoukas, H. (2009). What is reflection-in-action? A phenomenological account. *Journal of Management Studies*, 46(8), 1339-1364.

Education Literature

- Boud, D., Keogh, R., & Walker, D. (Eds.). (1985). *Reflection: Turning experience into learning*. Oxford, UK: Routledge.

Brookfield, S. D. (1995). *Becoming a critically reflective teacher*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Day, C. (2000). Effective leadership and reflective practice. *Reflective Practice*, 1(1), 113-127.

Ferry, N. M., & Ross-Gordon, J. M. (1998). An inquiry into Schön's epistemology of practice: Exploring links between experience and reflective practice. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 48(2), 98-112.

Health Care Professions

Brookfield, S. (1998). Critically reflective practice. *Journal of Continuing Education in the Health Professions*, 18(4), 197-205.

Johns, C. (1995). Framing learning through reflection within Carper's fundamental ways of knowing in nursing. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 22(2) 226-234.

Mamede, S., & Schmidt, H. (2005). Correlates of reflective practice in medicine. *Advances in Health Sciences Education, Theory and Practice*, 10, 327-337.

Mamede, S., & Schmidt, H. (2004). The structure of reflective practice in medicine. *Medical Education*, 38, 1302-1306.

Mann, K., Gordon, J., & MacLeod, A. (2009). Reflection and reflective practice in health professions education: a systematic review. *Advances in health sciences education*, 14(4), 595-621.

Psychology Literature

Cooper, L. D., & Wieckowski, A. T. (2017). A structured approach to reflective practice training in a clinical practicum. *Training and Education in Professional Psychology*, 11(4), 252.

Finlay, L. (2008). Reflecting on reflective practice. *PBPL paper*, 52, 1-27.

Leung, D., & Kember, D. (2003). The relationship between approaches to learning and reflection upon practice. *Educational Psychology*, 23, 61-71.

Williams, A. (2013). Critical reflective practice: exploring a reflective group forum through the use of Bion's theory of group processes. *Reflective Practice*, 14(1), 75-87.