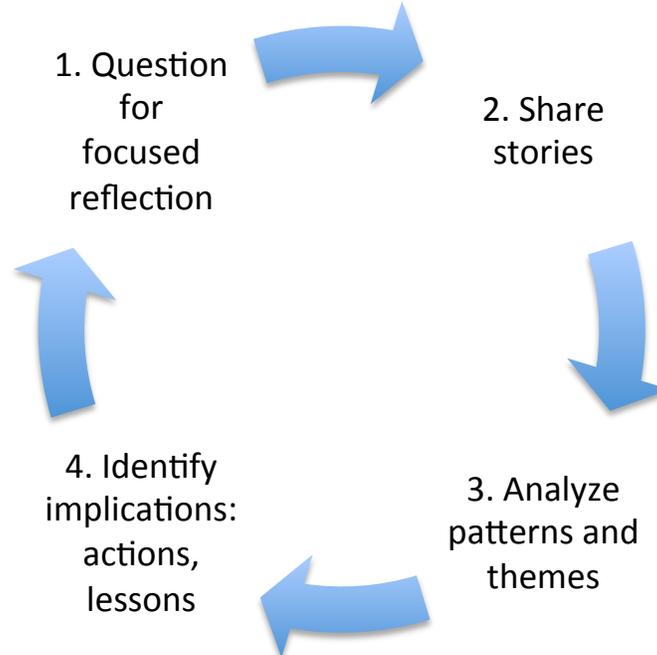


Reflective Practice Guide: Process for Developmental Evaluation



1. Group identifies a focus for inquiry and learning. An important (sensitizing) concept, basic premise, or fundamental value often offers a useful focus: an idea that provides direction and vision to the desired change but the meaning of which is still emergent.
2. Turn the concept, idea, value, or vision into an experiential inquiry question. The question is not an abstract question for intellectual discussion. It is a question that evokes experience.
3. Participants in the reflective practice group share their personal experiences (real-life anecdotes, lived experience stories) that respond to the question.
4. Group members can ask short clarifying questions. This is not a time for discussion or analysis. The focus is on understanding the story, on what happened and why.
5. After all stories have been shared, participants are asked to identify patterns and themes in the stories.
6. If there is more than one group engaged in the reflective practice exercise, each group reports their themes and patterns to the full group. The facilitator records the themes and patterns, and combines those that appear to be similar or duplicative.
7. Once patterns or themes are identified, turn to implications (discussion and analysis). The group picks one or two themes that have important implications for the work at hand. The members discuss those implications. This often involves identifying important lessons.
8. Generate action agreements and next steps for future reflective practice.

(Patton, 2011, pp. 266-269; Patton, 2015, pp. 215-216)

The Missing Link? Using Reflection to Advance Qualitative Evaluation and Assessment in Libraries and Information Services [Workshop Handout]

VARIATIONS AND ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE

- People come prepared with their stories written in advance. This can increase thoughtfulness and anticipation, and makes it far easier for the developmental evaluator to capture the stories (data) from the reflective practice participants. Potential downside: Less spontaneity.
- Tape the stories as a group record and transcribe them so the developmental evaluator – *and the group* – has a record of the “data” from the stories. This is only for the group’s use, keeping in mind agreement about confidentiality.
- If the reflective practice stories (as opposed to just the patterns and themes) are to be used for formal, external evaluation reporting, how the stories are reported (e.g., whether identities are disguised) has to be negotiated with the reflective practice group and informed consent procedures followed.
- Instead of simply listing themes, arrange them into a generic story or systems map showing how themes are interrelated and interconnected (spider web of themes rather than a linear list).
- A variation on the sharing process with large groups is to do a second round of thematic analysis after the first round. So, let’s say we have a group of 25. Five small groups of five people each engage in the initial reflective practice process. Then, instead of reporting their themes to the full group, each group numbers off from 1 to 5. Everyone has a list of themes from their group. The 1s assemble as a new cross-cutting group; likewise the 2s, etc. Now we have five new groups that can synthesize the patterns and themes they bring from their first-round-of-analysis groups. These groups then report to the whole group, which as a whole synthesizes the final set of patterns and themes.

References

- Patton, M. Q. (2011). *Developmental evaluation: Applying complexity concepts to enhance innovation and use*. New York: Guilford Press.
- Patton, M. Q. (2015). *Qualitative research & evaluation methods* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.