

REFLECTIVE PRACTICE: A RESOLUTION YOU CAN MAKE—AND KEEP!

Reflective practice. What is it? How do I do it?

These are questions I am often asked when discussing the process of recording a learning outcome for completing ALIA PD Scheme requirements.

When was the last time you acknowledged to yourself that you had learned something from an experience? It might be realising there was a more efficient way to organise something or a new technique you tried. Whatever the experience that prompted the thought, did you know you were engaging in reflective practice?

When we are aware we've learnt, then we've consciously been analysing. We do it a lot, quite naturally. And it's a valuable tool for continuing professional development (CPD), including as a requirement of the ALIA PD scheme.

The act of reflection is seen as a way of promoting the development of autonomous, qualified and self-directed professionals. In fact, reflective practice is a defining characteristic of professionalism.

Don't let the terminology put you off. To gain real value in terms of professional development, all we need to do is take the time to think it through in critical terms.

Narelle Hampe is the Student Liaison Librarian within the Central Coast Local Health District Libraries for the University of Newcastle's Ourimbah Campus Library, and a recent graduate of the Master of Arts in Information and Knowledge Libraries. Narelle has been researching reflective practice and reflective writing through her studies.

She has now written a set of guidelines to help others get started with reflective practice and made these available as a resource through the ALIA PD Scheme page on the ALIA website. Reflective Practice and Writing: a Guide to Getting Started includes a very useful reflective

practice vocabulary prompter to help you recognise and remember your own reflective practice learnings.

Narelle points out that reflective practice adds value to all professional development activities.

"It makes you think about what you need to learn and what you have learned. It is all too easy to forget that you need to keep the PD going when you have lots of other things on the go."

Reflective practice is applicable in any job, not just those in traditional library environments. It is a highly valuable and adaptable, yet very personal, way of adding to your career expertise.

Narelle says, "reflective practice and reflective writing require time, commitment, honesty and practice".

Ongoing learning for LIS professionals pursuing best practice is a given. The ALIA PD Scheme provides a framework for formal recognition of the CPD you undertake, and ALIA Certified Professional membership acknowledges that commitment. So now is a great time to learn how to make the most of CPD by incorporating reflective practice in your PD tool kit.

**THE BEST 2014 NEW YEAR
RESOLUTION IS A PLAN TO MAKE
THE MOST OF THE PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT YOU UNDERTAKE
DURING THIS YEAR.**

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