

**Reflective Practice for Professional Growth
&
Personal Resilience**



**Meaningful and Practical Exercises to Help Clarify the
What, Why and How of Your Calling
-Steve Piscitelli-
Annual Conference on The First-Year Experience (2015)
Dallas, Texas**

Thank you for taking time to participate in this session. If you would like to share ideas after the session, feel free to contact me.

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Steve Piscitelli



Session Opening Thought Provoker

*The range of what we think and do
Is limited by what we fail to notice
And because we fail to notice
That we fail to notice
There is little we can do
To change
Until we notice
How failing to notice
Shapes our thoughts and deeds.*

-R.D. Laing-

What do the above words mean to you?

How can you connect the words to your professional growth and personal resilience?

Reflective Practice Exercise #1: Choosing Appropriate Game Film Strategies

“Game Film” is a metaphor for methods we can use to become more aware of what we do and do not do in any given space in our lives. This is where we *capture* what we do. It can be eye-opening.

The following is a short list of potential methods for gathering your game film. For each one, (1) reflect on benefits and challenges for each. List one benefit and one challenge; and (2) briefly explain why you would or would not consider using the method. Write your responses here or in your own journal.

Gathering Game Film

1. Reflecting in Action (reflecting *during* the doing of your practice) (R.I.A.)
 - a. Benefit:

 - b. Challenge:

 - c. I would use/have used/would not use it because:

2. Reflecting on Action (reflecting *after* something happened) (R.O.A.)
 - a. Benefit:

 - b. Challenge:

 - c. I would use/have used/would not use it because:

EXAMPLES OF R.O.A.

3. Audio recording
 - a. Benefit:

 - b. Challenge:

 - c. I would use/have used/would not use because:

4. Blogs

- a. Benefit:

- b. Challenge:

- c. I would use/have used/would not use it because:

5. Collaboration with a colleague/coach/mentor

- a. Benefit:

- b. Challenge:

- c. I would use/have used/would not use it because:

6. Content analysis

- a. Benefit:

- b. Challenge:

- c. I would use/have used/would not use it because:

7. Critical incident review

- a. Benefit:

- b. Challenge:

- c. I would use/have used/would not use it because:

8. Journaling

- a. Benefit:

- b. Challenge:

- c. I would use/have used/would not use it because:

9. Observation

- a. Benefit:

- b. Challenge:

- c. I would use/have used/would not use it because:

10. Meditation

- a. Benefit:

- b. Challenge:

- c. I would use/have used/would not use it because:

11. Role plays and simulations

- a. Benefit:

- b. Challenge:

- c. I would use/have used/would not use it because:

12. S.C.O.R.E. (Seating Chart Observation Record)

- a. Benefit:

- b. Challenge:

- c. I would use/have used/would not use it because:

13. Video

- a. Benefit:

- b. Challenge:

- c. I would use/have used/would not use it because:

14. Other

- a. Benefit:

- b. Challenge:

- c. I would use/have used/would not use it because:

Reflective Practice Exercise #2: Recording a Critical Incident

*“A critical incident is a vividly remembered event
which is unplanned and unanticipated.”*

-Stephen Brookfield-

For this reflection, consider a classroom or campus-at-large situation from the most recent semester. Write your thoughts to the following questions. Don't edit yourself. Write what comes to your mind. Write your responses here or in your own journal.

- What method(s) of game film did you use to gather your recollections?
- What took place?
 - As completely as you can remember, write about the incident. What actually happened?
- What factors contributed to the success/challenge? Explain as best helps you to understand fully what happened.
 - You?
 - The students?
 - A colleague?
 - Campus resources?
 - Community resources?
 - A non-colleague coach/friend/mentor?
 - The content?
 - The pacing?
 - The technology?
 - Other?

Reflective Practice Exercise #3: Reflection on a Critical Incident

For this exercise you will need **Reflective Practice Exercise #2: Recording a Critical Incident**. Review your written reflection and then respond to the following items. Don't edit yourself. Write what comes to your mind. Write your responses here or in your own journal.

- How do you know your account (Exercise #2) is accurate?
 - What methods did you use to gather your information about what happened?
- What worked really well—and/or not so well?
 - How do you know your assessment is accurate? What is your “game film”?
- What assumptions were you carrying with you (then and now) about the incident?
 - That is, why did you react or respond like you did?
- How can this be improved?
 - How can you build on this (even if the situation went well)?
- In short: What (happened)? So what (is the importance of this issue)? Now what (will you do as a result)?

Reflective Practice Exercise #7: Principles of Student (Life) Success

The educational research points to certain basic principles of student success. While they might be labeled/identified differently from study to study, you will find similar categorization. The list below is provided alphabetically rather than in any order of importance:

1. Active involvement
2. Personal relevance
3. Personal validation
4. Self-awareness
5. Self-efficacy
6. Sense of purpose
7. Social integration

Write your responses here or in your own journal:

- When you think about your teaching philosophy which of the above principles is the most important to you as a teacher?

- How do you know what you say above is in fact accurate?

- Provide one recent concrete example to support your choice of your #1 (or most practiced) principle.

- Has your #1 principle changed over the years you have been in the calling? In what ways? Why or why not?

Reflective Practice Exercise #13: The Five Whys

(Adapted from Jim Collins)

- Go back to a recent reflective practice exercise that you conducted. Take a close look at the topic/incident on which you chose to reflect. What was the topic/incident you chose? Describe it in a few words/sentences here (or in your own journal):

- Review any insights you gained from the exercise noted above. And then form five “why” questions to further understand why this particular topic/incident is of value to you. Below is one (non-classroom) example. Formulate questions that work best for you. Once you come up with your own, write each question along with each answer. Each successive “why” question should originate from the previous answer.

- **EXAMPLE**
 - Topic: I want to lose 10 pounds.
 - Question #1. Why do I want to lose 10 pounds?
 - Answer #1. I seem to have little too much of a muffin top hanging over my belt.
 - Question #2. Why is this “muffin top” a concern for me?
 - Answer #2. I want to be able to fit into my old jeans.
 - Question #3. Why is it important that I fit into my old jeans?
 - Answer #3. I think I look good in those jeans.
 - Question #4. Why is it important to look good in those jeans?
 - Answer #4. I want people to notice how great I look.
 - Question #5. Why is it important for people to notice how great I look?
 - Answer #5. I am getting older and I am becoming more conscious of how I look.

- **LIGHT BULB MOMENT.** Once you have completed your Q & A, what have you discovered is important to you regarding this topic? Can you expand this insight to any other parts of your professional or personal life?

- **CONSIDERATION.** For this exercise you may wish to collaborate with a colleague/coach/mentor. Find someone you trust and who will be brutally honest with you. This person may be able to help you develop more pointed “why” questions. And she/he may help you dig deeper (and more introspectively) on each answer.

Reflective Practice Exercise #15: Kaizen and Movement to Improvement

Kaizen is a Japanese word that means *good change*. Small steps for continuous improvement.

Based on your reflective practice to date, pick one area in which you would like to make improvement. Use the following prompts to help you formulate your plans. Write your responses here or in your own journal.

- What change would you like to see in your teaching practice? What is your long range goal?

- How did you come to discover the need for this change? That is, what was your game film method? Was there collaborative help to identify this need?

- Why do you want to implement this change in your teaching practice? If you have not done so, you may wish to engage in the “5 Whys” at this stage of your kaizen practice (see workbook, Exercise #13).

- What resources will you need to implement this change in your teaching practice?

- What is your first step in this movement to improvement—and when will you take it?

- How will you know if you are on the right course? That is, what will you use for your game film along the way?

- What will your subsequent steps consist of on your movement to improvement?

Appendix A

The Six Dimensions of Wellbeing, Balance, and Resilience



Steve Piscitelli. *Choices for College Success, 3rd edition* (Boston: Pearson Education, 2015)

Appendix B*
Reflective Practice:
You Gotta Know When to Capture, Know When to Reflect!

	Reflecting in Action (RIA)	Reflecting on Action (ROA)
Capture	<p style="text-align: center;">LIVE— in your mind’s eye.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Metacognition • Recognizing assumptions • Evaluating information • Draw conclusions 	<p style="text-align: center;">LIVE— intermediary present</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audio recording • Blogging • Collaboration • Content analysis • Critical incident review • Journaling • Meditation • Observation • Role plays/simulations • S.C.O.R.E. • Video • Other
Reflect	IMMEDIATE	LATER—AND DEEPER

*Thanks to Dr. John Wall (Florida State College at Jacksonville) for helping me visualize, create, and clarify this.

Appendix C

A Menu of Reflective Practice Exercises

- *Reflective Practice Exercise #1: Choosing Appropriate Game Film Strategies*
 - “Game Film” is a metaphor for methods we can use to become more aware of what do and do not do in any given space in our lives.
- *Reflective Practice Exercise #2: Recording a Critical Incident*
 - For this reflection, consider a classroom or campus-at-large situation from the most recent semester.
- *Reflective Practice Exercise #3: Reflection on a Critical Incident*
 - Once you have gathered your game film, it’s time to reflect.
- *Reflective Practice Exercise #4: Reflecting on Your Career (a Longitudinal View)*
 - Consider how you have grown into (or out of) the calling.
- *Reflective Practice Exercise #5: Your Most Instructive Teacher*
 - You have had many school teachers throughout your life. Some stand out above all the others.
- *Reflective Practice Exercise #6: Your Syllabus*
 - Flip through the pages of your syllabus. Pause and observe the structure, the emphases, the length, recurring themes, the detail, and the appearance.
- *Reflective Practice Exercise #7: Principles of Student (Life) Success*
 - When you think about your teaching philosophy which principle(s) is/are the most important to you as a teacher?
- *Reflective Practice Exercise #8: Draw a Map of Your Teaching Journey*
 - Using whatever visual arts talent you have, draw your teaching journey.
- *Reflective Practice Exercise #9: Norm Challenging*
 - Sometimes effective teachers challenge a norm or take a risk with calculation and reason.
- *Reflective Practice Exercise #10: I Remember When I Made a Difference*
 - Describe a situation in which you made a difference as a teacher—a real difference in someone’s life.
- *Reflective Practice Exercise #11: Non-Negotiables!*
 - A “non-negotiable” describes something so important to you that you would not ever consider compromising on it.
- *Reflective Practice Exercise #12: Legacy*
 - When your teaching days draw to a close, what legacy do you want to leave?
- *Reflective Practice Exercise #13: The Five Whys*
 - Review any insights you gained from the exercise. And then form five “why” questions to further understand why this particular topic/incident is of value to you.
- *Reflective Practice Exercise #14: Got N.O.B.S.*?*
 - Whether you are a novice or a veteran of reflective practice, don’t forget the importance of feedback from colleagues, mentors, coaches, friends, and family.
- *Reflective Practice Exercise #15: Kaizen and Movement to Improvement*
 - Based on your reflective practice to date, pick one area in which you would like to make improvement.

Appendix D

Selected Readings for Reflective Practice for Professional Growth and Personal Resilience

Anderson, Chris. "Crowd Accelerated Innovation." TED. 2011.

Berger, Warren. *A More Beautiful Question: The Power of Inquiry to Spark Breakthrough Ideas*. New York: Bloomsbury, 2014.

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Piscitelli, Steve. *Choices for College Success (3rd ed.)*. Boston: Pearson Education, 2015)

Piscitelli, Steve. "Awareness, Assumptions, and Actions. Why Do You Do What You Do? A TEDx-FSCJ talk. September 2014. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HZQ2GEhoWys>

Piscitelli, Steve. Selected YouTube videos/playlists from Steve's YouTube Channel:

- Change: <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLHs9tcF6fT3QBhfzuFOuOLRq4GXtySdU->

- Professional Growth and Personal Resilience: <http://youtu.be/38tTPCZGK-4>
- Reflective Practice: https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLHs9tcF6fT3QaicPKIGVjEQPekCG_q7RO
- Reflective Practice: Understanding the Critical Incident: http://youtu.be/8Z9B-96KYj8?list=PLHs9tcF6fT3QaicPKIGVjEQPekCG_q7RO

Rath, Tom and Jim Harter. *Wellbeing*. New York: Gallup Press, 2010.

Reflecting on Action:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bg0bUUkH0gl&index=5&list=PLHs9tcF6fT3QaicPKIGVjEQPekCG_q7RO

“Reflective Teaching: Exploring Our Own Classroom Practice.” *Teaching English*.

<http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/reflective-teaching-exploring-our-own-classroom-practice>

Richards, Jack C. “Towards Reflective Teaching.” *The Teacher Trainer*. No date.

Roueche, John, et. al. *Practical Magic*. Washington, D.C.: American Association of Community Colleges, 2003.

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