Reflective question prompts for the UKPSF

# Hazel Corradi, Academic Staff Developer, University of Bath

bsphre@bath.ac.uk

# Introduction

These questions were designed to support new lecturers to reflect on their practice to write a claim for Fellowship of the HEA. The development programme we have for new lecturers at the University of Bath requires them to make a FHEA claim within their probationary period (3 years) so we needed to find ways to scaffold large numbers of people work through appropriate reflective practice and evidence collection to make their claim.

These questions are not official Advance HE resources but are my interpretation of what I think is appropriate for our new lecturers at the University of Bath. So they are at the interface of what we could call the Intended Learning Outcomes for our new academics and the interpretation of the UKPSF that I consider relevant to our context. The UKPSF itself is broad and can be interpreted in many ways which are not reflected by these questions. Please feel free to disagree with my interpretation. This is just something that works in our context where we have many academics for whom reflective practice is not a core part of their home discipline. Please note, we also do not use these resources in isolation, but they are introduced as part of workshops explaining the UKPSF and reflective practice.

There are some reflections for each area of activity of the UKPSF. Links to the core knowledge and professional values as they intersect with each area are also indicated (again, I’m sure this could also be done differently).

# Re-use and distribution

Please feel free to adapt these resources, or be inspired by them. I would expect that your context might not exactly match ours and you may have a different local interpretation of the UKPSF or other institutional emphases that you wish to include.

If you improve them or have ideas of how we can expand them then do get in touch and reshare them with me.

# Questions for A1

Is the content of my teaching…

* + Up to date? (K1)
  + Matching my research specialism (not always possible)? (K1)
  + Meeting the needs of the professional sector? (K6, V4)
  + Motivating for students? (K3)
  + Following on from, or feeding into, other units on the programme?

Is the way I have designed my teaching…

* + Motivating for students (K3)
  + Clear as to the overall purpose
  + Meeting QAA descriptors and skills for the level I’m teaching (K6)
  + Fitting with other teaching methods in my department (K2)
  + Inclusive of different student learning needs (V1, V2)
  + Allowing development of skills relevant to today’s world. (V4)
  + Matching the universities key priorities (as outlined in curriculum transformation) (V4)

## Note on writing reflectively on A1

A1 is about design, but can be about design of classes, as well as courses and programmes. If you have been involved in course design, this is a great opportunity to reflect on it. But if not, reflecting on a particular design of a class, or a lab is also fine. What you need to do is comment on design principles (e.g. from the literature) and evaluate how well you design has worked in your context and how it can be improved (or why it is so effective).

## Example questions to show how you can structure your case study to evidence reflection on A1

* Which class/course/programme design have you chosen to reflect on and why?
* What was the thinking behind this design? What design principles is it based on?
* How were the learning outcomes decided? What thinking went into the choice?
  + Have peers reviewed your design? What was their feedback?
* How is the design working?
  + Do the student understand how they should be learning?
  + Are they meeting the intended learning outcomes?
  + Is your choice of assessment allowing you to assess the key learning outcomes?
* What are the strengths of the design?
  + Can you conceptualise why it is working for your context?
* What are the weaknesses of the design?
  + What other options might work better?
  + Are these approaches supported by the education literature?
* What have you managed to tweak to improve your design (depending on what you’re reflecting on)?
* Or what are you planning to change when possible?
  + Type, or timing of assessment
  + Mechanism of delivery
  + Dialogue (feedback) with students
  + Different online support

# Questions for A2

Are my classroom practices/online interactions helping students learn?

Are my preferred teaching methods compatible with the makeup/background/size of my class?

Which teaching methods work best with different teaching opportunities (lectures/tutorials/labs/seminars/online)? How can I adapt my style to these?

## Example questions to show how you can structure your case study to evidence reflection on A2.

* What classroom practices (or online interactions) do you use? Which are you choosing to reflect on here?
* What is the desired outcome of this teaching approach?
  + Subject specific or other pedagogy? (V3)
* Why have you used this teaching approach? What was the theoretical basis for choosing it?
  + Discipline norms? Peer advice? (K1, V4)
  + QAA or professional body expectations? (K6)
  + Subject specific or other pedagogy? (V3)
* How effective (in enabling student learning) do you think you have been in using this approach? (K5)
  + Own observations and reflections
  + Evidence from peers
  + Evidence from student feedback
  + Evidence from student achievement
* Based on these observations, what are the strengths and weaknesses of this approach for your context? (A5, K5)
  + Can you support your observations from further reading of the literature?
  + How much does the effectiveness of the method depend on the students?
  + How much does it depend on your performance?
* What have you changed in your practice? Or what do you plan to try?
  + Why have you chosen this change? Practicalities
  + What would be the ideal approach/performance?
  + What literature/theory would support this new approach in this context? (V3)

# Questions for A3

# there are *so* many different aspects to choose from! (aspects relating to feedback could also be written about in A4)

Is your assessment fair, valid and reliable? If so, why/how? If not, how not/why not?

How have you followed department/university procedures to ensure your assessment is valid/ your marking meets sector norms/your feedback is timely and useful? (e.g. exam question review, making standardisation or moderation, external examiner feedback, QA16)

Is your assessment authentic to what you wish students to achieve as part of the programme? (e.g. research projects/papers are one example of an authentic assessment).

Could you make your assessment more authentic?

Is your assessment structured as to give students the opportunity to receive meaningful feedback that they can apply to future assessments?

Does your assessment/feedback structure motivate students to learn what you want them to learn (rather than just what is easy to assess!)?

How do you induct students into your types of assessment? (e.g. exemplars, marking criteria)

How do you enable students to get feedback, and assess their own performance, on high-stakes tasks before the hand-in?

How do you ensure your feedback is timely and something the student can use to learn or improve their performance? (e.g. automated quizzes, audio/oral feedback, using comment banks and/or marking grids etc.)

What feedback process works best for different aspects of your teaching and why? (e.g. oral feedback during labs, annotations on calculations)

## Note on the challenge of A3

For each area of activity, you need to show evidence of reflective practice, but also that you have achieved some effective practice. A3 is tricky as you need to talk about assessment AND feedback. But you could show how your assessment is *effective* through working within university regulations and how you’ve improved student learning through *reflective practice* on feedback. We know that formal assessment practices cannot be changed quickly so we do not expect you to have done this. In addition to the suggestion below, another way to conceptualise this section is to write it as ‘my story of what I have learnt about assessment and feedback’, rather than it needing to focus on a particular unit or assessment e.g. what I have learnt about how to mark fairly, how I have made my formal feedback more concise and efficient to free up time producing more useful learning resources such as exemplars.

## Example questions to show how you can structure your case study to evidence effective practice in, and reflection on, A3

* How have you carried out your assessments within the department/university procedures? (K6)
* What have you learnt about the effectiveness of these procedures? Are there things you can do that make the processes work better? (K2)
* How have you managed to ensure that your assessment and marking are fair? (K2)
  + Peer review of assessment questions
  + Standardisation of marking teams
  + Moderation of marks and unit board discussions
  + External examiner feedback
* Which of these do you think is the most effective and why?
* What types of feedback do you offer your students? Which have you picked to reflect on and why?
* What do you hope the students can learn from this feedback? (K3)
* What is it in the design of the feedback approach that should enable this? (K2)
* How effective do you think you have been in providing this feedback? (K5)
  + Own reflections
  + Student achievement in later work
  + Feedback from students on how they use the feedback
* If the student hasn’t been able to use the feedback, why not?
  + Not in time for next assignment?
  + They don’t know what you mean by ‘this assignment needs more reflection’
  + The next assignment isn’t similar enough to apply the feedback
  + They are so overwhelmed with coursework they have no time to practice the aspects recommended in the feedback
* If the students have used your feedback, what was it that made this approach work?
  + And can this approach be applied to other assessments?
  + Or in curriculum transformation can you change the assessment structure to give more of these feedback opportunities?
  + Is this approach supported by the literature? (V3)
* What have you changed in your practice? Or what do you plan to try? (A5)
  + Different ways to give feedback? (online? K4)
  + Structure assessments to enable feedback to be more timely.
  + Ensure the students are supported with exemplars and advice at the time they need it?

# Questions for A4

What is the overall learning experience for students on my unit/programme? How do the different learning opportunities fit together?

Do I take advantage of the different types of learning opportunities to enable students to engage with the material in different ways?

How do I ensure that the learning opportunities are inclusive?

How do the learning opportunities in my course/program add up to enable students to become reflective practitioners/deep thinkers/competent researchers (or whatever the overall aim of your programme is!)?

## Example questions to show how you can structure your case study to evidence reflection on A4.

* What learning opportunities or learning design are choosing to reflect on here? Why have you picked this aspect?
* What is the desired outcome of this combination of learning activities?
  + Discipline norms? Peer advice? (K1, V4)
  + QAA or professional body expectations? (K6)
  + Subject specific or other pedagogy? (V3)
* How effective (in enabling student learning) do you think this learning environment is for the students? (K5)
  + Own observations and reflections
  + Evidence from peers
  + Evidence from student feedback
  + Evidence from student achievement
* Based on these observations, what are the strengths and weaknesses of this approach for your context? (A5, K5)
  + Can you support your observations from further reading of the literature?
  + How much does the effectiveness of the method depend on the students?
  + How much does it depend on your performance?
* What have you changed in your practice? Or what do you plan to try?
  + Why have you chosen this change? Practicalities?
  + What would be the ideal approach?
  + What literature/theory would support this new approach in this context? (V3)

# Questions for A5

Is the way I am doing my reflective practice working? (helping me find teaching approaches that I am comfortable with that help students to learn)

Have I been able to collect the most useful evidence to enable me to develop my teaching? What has been the most useful so far?

Has my note keeping of what has and hasn’t gone well worked? Do I need to try a different approach?

Have I forged productive relationships with colleagues to enable honest discussion and facilitate peer review?

Have I found useful professional and online communities for support and ideas?

Have I found useful discipline specific educational journals to help me evidence and develop my practice?

What have been the most useful ways to collect feedback from students? Can I do more of this?

Have I sourced and completed any training to meet a perceived developmental need? What did I learn from this? How have I changed my practice based on it?

## Notes on how A5 is different

A5 is about your continuing professional development, so should be based in reflective practice. Hopefully, you have shown reflective practice to some extent in case studies A1-A4.

Therefore, you could use this section to:

1. Give another example of reflective practice that didn’t fit elsewhere, and use it to show in general how you develop using reflective practice
2. Reflect on how your reflective practice is working in terms of helping you develop (see questions above)
3. Talk about specific things you have done to develop your practice -but please note, you need to focus on what you have learnt from these things and how you have developed your practice based on them. A list of ‘training sessions’ attended is not of interest. We want to know why you chose to go to them, what you learnt, and what you now do differently.

## Example of how you could reflect on your reflective practice if you chose this option

* What aspects of your teaching did you think would be useful to reflect on when you started?
  + What evidence did you therefore plan to collect?
* Were these the aspects that needed most attention?
  + Did the evidence help you understand your effectiveness in these areas?
  + Do you wish you had collected different evidence from peers? (been more specific about what you wanted in peer review)
  + Do you wish you had collected different evidence from students? (e.g. done the stop start continue earlier, taken the opportunity to talk to your tutees)
* What have you learnt about the process of reflective practice?
* Do you feel more confident in your teaching with the evidence for effectiveness you have collected?
* How have you adapted (will you adapt) your reflective practice to work better for you
  + Different note keeping
  + Talking to more constructive peers
  + Finding better ways to evaluate student learning during the course (e.g. 1 minute papers)
  + Join Conversation with Cake to find out about interesting education literature without having to search for it myself (this is Hazel’s shameless plug for conversation with cake)
* What practices have worked that you wish to continue?
  + Types of note keeping
  + Informal student feedback
  + Talking to peers
  + Reading a particular discipline specific education journal that has good ideas for my subject.
  + Reading the fora for online communities focussing on teaching in my discipline.
* How would you like to further develop your practice in future?
  + What evidence would be most useful for this and how can you collect it…? (K5)