



Individual Reflective Journal

COVE+

THE ARMY'S PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

First Edition 2020

This journal belongs to:

for reflective practice as part of being a
military professional committed to life-long learning.

“We cannot choose our external circumstances, but
we can always choose how we respond to them.”

- *Epictetus*

If found, please return this private journal to:

What is **COVE+**?

The three components of Fighting Power are physical, intellectual and moral.

The aim of Army's Professional Development Program, COVE+, is to enhance the intellectual component of fighting power in order to improve the Army's capacity to apply, or threaten to apply, force against an adversary in the land domain.

COVE+ is a library of tertiary-level learning modules, each containing between 10 and 40 hours of content. It is hosted on the Australian Defence Education Learning Environment (Unclassified) or ADELE(U), as an online and self-paced program. Go to <https://www.adele.edu.au/course/index.php?categoryid=482> or you can use your QR reader to navigate via *The Cove*.



COVE+ modules have been developed in partnership with Australian tertiary institutions and cover a wide range of topics. They are specifically designed to enable you to tackle a broader range of complex problems through improving your critical thinking skills within the context of the Profession of Arms.

COVE+ provides the opportunity for all our people - regardless of SERCAT, rank, trade or Corps - to raise their individual critical thinking, decision making and professional knowledge in five categories of study:

- the art and science of thinking
- the art and science of war
- leadership, ethics and society
- science, technology, engineering and mathematics
- organisational management, projects and people.

This journal allows you to record your reflections on training and education activities that you undertake as part of your development as a professional soldier. The gateway module to COVE+, which covers Reflective Practice, will show you how you can use this journal, as well as alternate methods of reflection, such as electronic or on-line journals and the COVE+ App.

Be inquisitive. Choose what works for you. Invest your efforts in a worthwhile pursuit and reap the rewards.

A message from DG TRADOC, BRIG Glenn Ryan, CSC and Bar

Reflective Practice is deeply rooted in professional organisations that thrive to win. Learning organisations have proven to be successful at all levels of war. The success of the Blitzkrieg, the amphibious assault of Operation Overlord and NASAs approach to the Apollo program are the result of individual and organisational reflection that changed the way we think and operate as a joint force today.

Conflict, competition and cooperation in the current and future operating contexts will be complex, complicated and ambiguous. The ability to think, reflect, act and repeat in a meaningful way will benefit you, your team and the operational outcomes.

Reflective Practice will help you to analyse your own and the team's performance. By critically examining your experiences, including what you felt, observed and understood, the better insights you can have to change the future for yourself, the team and Army.

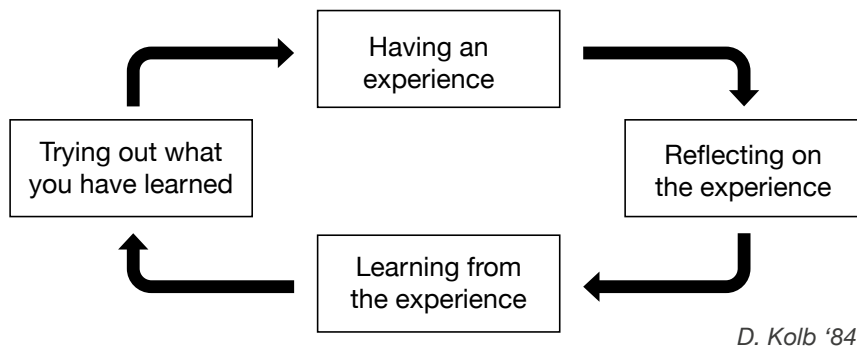
This journal is designed to help you record your reflections in a structured way to improve your performance in courses and on the job. The profession of arms is one of constant learning. Through constant learning, in a learning organisation, you will reap the rewards and be able to deliver positive improvements and promote the improvements through action.



What is Reflective Practice?

Reflective Practice is a process of deliberately interrogating experiences that we have in order to learn from them. This can be any experience and the practice can take many forms.

Many of us will have engaged in reflective practice subconsciously in the past. David Kolb's "experiential learning cycle" is a form of subconscious reflection:



In ancient Rome the Stoic philosophers made journaling a key part of their daily routine, both in the morning and evening. Marcus Aurelius' Meditations is a collection of the emperors' reflective thoughts.

While we do much of this subconsciously, in order to make it more meaningful and useful we should be active in our reflective practice. This can take many forms, one of which is the reflective journaling you are about to embark on.

Hot vs Cold

This distinction is about when we reflect. Hot reflection is done immediately after or very close to the event we want to reflect on. This allows us to interrogate our immediate thoughts and feelings on the event and can often feel quite raw and emotional. Despite this it gives us an honest idea on how the event affected us and what we want to do differently next time.

Cold reflection is done with some time between the event and the reflection. This allows us to gather our thoughts more and possibly see things more objectively. It can be more measured, and future focussed with goals being set as a result.

It is important to try to engage with both hot and cold reflection for different events as they will give us a fuller appreciation of how we can learn and take those lessons forward.

Lenses

When we reflect, we should try to interrogate events from a number of perspectives. To only look at events through our own eyes would give us a limited understanding of what has happened and how we can improve. Stephen Brookfield identified 4 different perspectives or lenses through which we could reflect:

Self - How has the event affected us? How could we improve as a result? What was or was not in our control?

Peers - Those that we work closely with and therefore can look at events from an outside perspective. They may see strengths or weaknesses that we do not. Conversations with peers can fine tune our own reflection.

Subordinates - Those who our decisions in certain events are imposed on. Their thoughts on our actions can help us learn about the consequences more directly and so continue to improve how we do things.

Theory - Whether Army doctrine or ideas and thoughts from elsewhere, reflecting on what these sources suggest about how to act during or deal with different events and comparing that to our own actions can help identify important learning points.

What can you reflect on?

Training

This could be any training event we take part in. Whether it is compulsory military training or something we do in our own time like a sport. Training experiences are specifically designed for us to learn, so reflection ensures that this learning sticks so we can use it when the time comes.

Experience

This could be taking part in exercises like TALISMAN SABRE or just something that happened on a Tuesday afternoon. If an experience feels relevant or important or just particularly good or bad then reflection will allow us to take all the learning opportunities from it.

Education

Whether this is formal education or a PME module education needs reflection to turn what can be an abstract theory into something relevant that we can use in every day life. Through reflection we can understand how ideas learnt through education affect us and how we can use them to make life at work better or jobs we are doing easier.

How will Reflective Practice support you?

Personal

Reflective practice can be used to help us grow and develop or to get through difficult or testing times as it shows us the opportunities to learn, develop and just generally get better.

Any personal goal can be supported by reflective practice; giving an honest idea of your start point and then how you are developing throughout the process and finally, how you may do the process differently next time.

Career

This is the big change with the introduction of the new PME framework and why reflective practice is so important.

The Australian Army needs personnel who can self-learn because they will find themselves in environments and situations so diverse that specific training for each is impossible. Therefore those who take part in active reflection and can then demonstrate their learning will have this recognised in their PAR.

Through reflective practice personnel can turn a wide variety of events into PME opportunities and therefore if someone finds themselves in a busy job or out in the field for long periods of a posting they will not be disadvantaged. If they actively reflect on these events then they will still be learning lessons and developing as service personnel and again this will also be reflected in their PAR.

When reflection becomes part of the rhythm of life then it will also offer personnel a record of their development, of the obstacles they have overcome and the goals they have achieved.

How regularly should you reflect?

If an event feels significant then it is worth reflecting on using both hot and cold reflection. Sometimes this may happen multiple times on a single event such as a course or an exercise, these would all be worth reflecting on.

The general reflective questions given can form the basis of both hot and cold reflections, or you may want to add your own questions and prompts that are specific to what you are reflecting on.

Sometimes we may have a routine week, and this can be worth reflecting on, because how we act day to day will affect how we act in difficult or testing situations.

Try to make time to ensure reflection becomes routine, you have been given 52 spaces for reflection and there are 52 weeks of the year.

Positive Reflective Actions

WRITTEN:

Journal (Professional and Personal), The Cove, Twitter, Blog

VERBAL:

Conversation, Interviews, Discussion, Debate, Presentations, Brief, Fireside talks, 360 degree Reporting

ACTION:

Routine Change, Behavioural Change, Habit Introduction, Goals, Activity Scheduling, Examine Beliefs and Values, Mindfulness

Your Reflective Aims

“We are what we think,
All that we are Arises with our Thoughts.
With our Thoughts, We make the World.”

~ *Buddha*

What are your reflective aims?
Record your thoughts here

General Reflective Questions

These questions should form the basis of each reflection, use all of them, or pick ones that feel most relevant.

1. **Goals** - What did I want to achieve, discover or test?

2. **Beliefs** – What did I believe would happen? What was I confident of? What concerns did I have?

3. **Actions** – What did happen? What was in my control? What was not in my control?

4. **Application** – How can I apply this to upcoming situations?

5. **Improvement** – What do I need to learn or improve for next time? How will I see an impact?

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(Think personal, emotional, tactical points)

Cold Reflection:

(Think objective, strategic, long-term points)

What Next:

(Goals, new habits, what else do you want or need to learn)

Notes

Periodic Review

Take some time to look back over previous reflection.



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- Have you missed any opportunities to do so?
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Now that you have completed this journal with your reflections, you should archive it somewhere accessible for future reference and periodic review. You should also visit your local Army Education Centre learning hub to ask for another journal, or email soldier.cove@defence.gov.au requesting a replacement, quoting your PMKeyS number, rank, name and unit.

