Teaching Reflective Practice; can Human Resource Management (HRM) learn from research in other disciplines

Mel Bull, Sheffield Hallam University, m.bull@shu.ac.uk
Claire Taylor, Sheffield Hallam University, claire.taylor@shu.ac.uk

Abstract

Reflective practice is becoming ever-more prevalent as a key skill for Human Resource Management and other wider business disciplines (CIPD, 2013; BIFM, 2014). To understand the requirements of teaching reflective practice and the benefits this can bring to practical working life, this paper draws on research from the Facilities Management undergraduate course within Sheffield Business School delivered to mature professional students. The course engages with a reflective practice module that underpins the mindset of the course. Alongside the primary research will be a literature review in relation to reflective practice and observations from teaching reflective practice to HR professionals. The paper concludes with some initial thoughts for consideration and improvement and the need for further research into this area.

Key Words

Reflective Practice, HR, Facilities Management, Teaching, Multi-disciplinary

Biographies

Mel Bull is a Senior Lecturer teaching Reflective Practice and Organisational Behaviour to Facilities Management Practitioners and is Course Leader for the MBA in Facilities Management. Her doctoral research is entitled 'The use of reflective practice by facility managers: a hermeneutic exploration'.

Claire Taylor is a Senior Lecturer teaching Employee Relations and Human Resource Management. Claire has a range of industry experience within the private, public and third sectors. Her doctoral research interests are employee relations, social networking and workplace psychology.

1.0 Introduction

An opportunity is presented to analyse pedagogical approaches to teaching reflective practice across differing disciplines, addressing how teaching practice is developed to match the skills requirements of the Human Resource Management (HRM) sector. The purpose of the analysis is to address issues faced by lecturing teams on MSc HRM courses at Sheffield Hallam University (SHU).The teams have encountered portfolio submissions by mature students where a superficial discussion of reflective practice theory and practice is evident in content (Thompson & Pascal 2012). This paper will look at the agenda for reflective practice in higher education to ascertain what can be learned to aid engagement with this topic pedagogically.

Norrie et al (2012 p566), suggest poor implementation presents difficulties for on-going professional practice. They imply practice is reliant on the assumptions that individuals seek to question their critical thinking skills and previous actions in order to develop themselves. Smith (2001) discussed that mature students can often block reflective practice as a negative exercise which needs to be facilitated properly allowing for a deeper understanding of what reflection is both theoretically and in practice. Edwards and Thomas (2010) raise the question whether reflective practice can be taught (Thompson and Pascal, 2012). Their discussion highlights the issues Schön (1983,

1991) had initially with technical rationality, and have stated that there needs to be awareness that reflective practice is not just a skill to learn.

Developing reflective practice skills are purposeful as HRM has moved from a narrow, reactive role to a "wider canvas" denoting a paradigm shift towards strategic HRM (SHRM) (Gupta 2010:397). This shift requires employee empowerment, constant change management and strategic development, which require professionals to develop a reflective stance in volatile economic contexts. It is essential Universities encourage and develop reflective practice as a core competency.

This paper draws on current doctoral research of reflective practice within Facilities Management education (Bull, 2014) and reviews core requirements of teaching reflective practice within other sectors, analysing literature and requirements by professional bodies to explore whether HRM can learn from other disciplines. The paper will make recommendations for the future pedagogy at SHU.
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2.0 Background
The word "reflection" originates from the Latin verb "reflectere" which means bend or turn backwards (Fairbrother and Hibbert, 1997); correspondingly the core properties of reflection used in academic literature relate to "looking back" on our experiences (Moon, 1999). Several key educational theorists have analysed reflective practice (Boud et al, 1985, Van Manen, 1977, Mezirow, 1981 and Schön, 1983, 1991). Their thoughts have been linked to philosophers such as Dewey, Habermas and Friere; however there is little clarity between these key theorists on a definition of reflective practice.

The focus on reflective practice for HRM is driven by requirements in standards of education and training for HR practitioners in by the HR professional body the Chartered Institute of Personnel Development, (CIPD). CIPD require masters students to complete a module focusing on reflective practice as part of their accreditation and continued professional development (2013). The "Developing skills for Business Leadership" module is delivered over the duration of their course. The assessment includes a portfolio based on 7 learning outcomes including: interpersonal relationships, problem solving, financial resources, leadership and team working skills.

Conversely at Sheffield Business School, the undergraduate programme in Facilities Management (FM) is for mature professionals working in the FM industry. The first year includes a reflective portfolio to not only recognise the learning but to be aware of how the learning has impacted on practice (Bull, 2014). The British Institute of Facilities Management (BIFM), the professional body for this sector also recognise like the CIPD that continuing professional development (CPD) should include self-reflection on learning and reflective facilities management (FM) practice as a core module on their education routes. Thus it seemed fortuitous to explore what HRM could learn from the FM teaching practice in our university.

3.0 Literature Review

3.1 Core Concepts of Reflective Practice
Bengtsson (1995) highlights four basic aspects of reflection: reflection as self-reflection, reflection as thinking, reflection as self-understanding and the distancing function of self-reflection. This is further reiterated by Boyd and Fales (1983) who see reflective learning as an individual process and internal examining resulting in a changed conceptual perspective. According to Bolton (2010:xix) reflective practice is *"paying*

critical attention to the practical values and theories which inform everyday actions by examining practice reflectively and reflexively. This leads to developmental insight." Bolton further explains the concepts of reflection and reflexivity alongside the concept of values. *"Reflection is an in depth consideration of events or situations: the people involved, what they experienced and how they felt about it."* She states that to fully engage in reflection we have to be prepared to *"relive or review the experience"* and be able to *"replay from diverse points of view".* She continues to explain reflexivity as a way of "*standing outside the self to examine, for example, how seemingly unwittingly we are involved in creating social or professional structures counter to our espoused values."* By the meaning of values, she continues in explaining that these are manifested in practice. For example, *"we are what we do".* The recognition of the difference between our values in practice and our espoused values can be further explored through reflective practice to try to enable us to make them harmonious with each other. Osterman and Kootkamp (2004:13-14) refer to reflective practice being designed as a way to " facilitate identification, examination, and modification of the theories-in-use that shape behaviour... requiring change in deeply held action theories". This explanation identifies the active as opposed to passive engagement with this practice. It is not simply naval gazing but a way of changing our own inbuilt assumptions and behaviours.

3.2 Reflective Practice in Teaching
Smith (2001) discussed that mature leadership development students can often block reflective practice as a negative exercise. Teaching needs to be facilitated to allow for a deeper understanding of what reflection is. An anecdotal comment from a facilities management student reinforces this need, *"I don't want to engage in reflective practice, I am a positive person".* After further exploration with this student about their understanding and some more detailed clarification, this particular student recognised that reflection was not just about self-flagellation which allowed them to feel able to engage with the concept (Bull, 2014). There is also a danger of reflective practice becoming confession like (Bleakley, 2000), it is not just an unburdening of guilt. Fairbrother and Hibbert (1997:5) also refer to feedback from students who have studied a reflective practice module through nursing education; when asked what advice they would give to new students about to start the module they said:

- *"Watch where you walk some of it is thin ice.*
- *At times the group were very irritable about reflective practice. I know I was.*
- *Do it! Be prepared to have your ideas shaken about.*
- *I went through a complex learning process through this (reflective practice) module and it has certainly made me look at a lot of things from a new perspective."*

This reinforces the initial responses to the idea of being critically self-aware and being able to question your own values and beliefs (Moon, 1999).

The concept of reflexivity according to Cunliffe (2009) is taking reflective practice further in relation to not only understanding our practices but also how we relate with others, the creation or organisational realities' shared practice and also how we talk and use language. This allows for recognition of how our circumstances and relationships are considered in relation to our behaviours as opposed to merely reacting to them and this can help to understand and revise ethical ways of being. Consideration also needs to include whether there is a difference between our values in practice and our espoused values. Can this be affected by organisational values being different to our own? Bolton (2010) refers to reflexivity as an awareness of how

"I" am experienced and perceived by others. Bolton also discussed her use of reflective and reflexive practice as a "through-the-mirror" method to allow for a combined reflexive and reflective journey.

Locating reflection in teaching practice can be evidenced back to Dewey (1933) as he considered the way of taking in new knowledge and the thought process that this can commence; he defined reflection as *"active, persistent and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in light of the grounds that support it and further conclusions to which it tends constitutes reflective thought"* (Dewey, 1933:9). As discussed previously, this still has some focus on an active as opposed to passive process. Whilst Dewey does not refer to the emotional engagement in relation to learning and reflective practice, Boud et al (1985:19) defines reflection as *" a generic term for those intellectual and affective activities in which individuals engage to explore their experiences in order to lead to new understandings and appreciations".*

Schön (1983, 1991) takes a different view in relation to epistemological knowledge in the workplace. He discusses how professionals or practitioners are expected to have the technical skills; and in facilities management terms this might include skills such as engineering. He refers to the growth in Positivist stances in relation to learning as predominantly these stances have been formed from scientific professions such as medicine and the sciences within universities in the late 19th century when positivism was predominant and names this technical rationality. "Technical rationality is the Positivist epistemology of practice." This relates to the delivery of theory or knowledge in a controlled setting; Schön considers this to be inadequate and that the practitioner must engage in some reflective practice in order for the learning process to be complete. Thus there is a need for reality to be used as well, evidence of theory in practice. As Edwards and Thomas (2010) discussed Schön's ideas were the start of popularity in relation to professional development in the 1980s. Schön's ideas also fed into the concept of reflective practice in teaching and especially in teacher education (Day, 1999; Hadfield, 2004).

Interestingly Edwards and Thomas (2010) raise the question whether reflective practice can be taught. Their discussion almost highlights the issues Schön had initially with technical rationality, and have stated there needs to be awareness that reflective practice is not just a skill to learn. As Dewey (1933) discussed this needs to be "lived practices" as opposed to a teacher's delivery of a skill to become more self-critical.

3.3 Reflective Practice Skills
The skills associated with being able to be reflective don't appear to be directly discussed in the literature, however, Boud et al (1985) recognise the importance of open mindedness and motivation and whilst these are not necessarily skills to be learned they are prerequisites for reflective practice (Atkins and Murphy, 1993). Atkins and Murphy (1993:1190) continue to state that *"self-awareness, an analysis of feelings and knowledge, and the development of a new perspective"* are crucial to reflection. They suggest that these could be considered as the following skills:

- *Self-awareness*: an ability to able to analyse our own feelings
- *Description*: accurate recollection of events
- *Critical analysis*: including challenging own assumptions and existing knowledge
- *Synthesis*: integration of existing and new knowledge
- *Evaluation*: As Bloom et al (1956) state this is making judgements about the value of something.

The above list links to the requirements outlined in the MSc HRM CIPD requirements and are linked closely to Bloom's taxonomy (1956). The authors concur with Mezirow (1981) that both synthesis and evaluation are crucial to developing new perspectives. Kolb's (1984) four stage cycle of learning also allows further consideration for reflection in our learning process. However, whilst Kolb's iterative model states the ideas of having a concrete experience; observing, reviewing and reflecting on that experience; linking ideas to previous experience; and then planning and deciding on future actions; the impact of the reflection does not seem to be engaged with in depth. It does appear to be more of a review of the experience rather than a true deep critical reflection. Again, as with Bloom's model, they both have their value and place in understanding our learning but both are limited as discussed above. Fry et al (1999:23) discussed constructivism focusing on experiential learning and reflection and uses the concept that no-one is a blank sheet we are merely giving the option to add or change pre-existing knowledge discussed by Mezirow (1991).

3.4 Reflective Practice in Teaching HRM
The formative feedback from students at SHU suggests they perceive reflective practice of little practical use; as Fook, White and Gardner (2006) highlight this raises concerns over a simplification in teaching of genuine reflective practice. The following documentary evidence taken from the portfolio submissions in 2013 highlights the significance for this research.

Student A: *I am by no means a fully functioning reflective practitioner as it takes time, firstly to get used to the idea of what it actually is and what processes can be used. I need to find something that is quick and punchy; I don't have the time or the inclination to keep a journal and flittered around the idea of a diary…. neither one has stuck…. my role is task focused and not strategic so the benefits of reflection are unidentifiable… I see this as something that is more useful as you move up the promotion ladder.*

Student B: *My opinion of reflective practice is somewhat divided… I dislike keeping a journal and find it too time consuming to build into my daily routine.. I also over analyse thoughts which at the time made me paranoid… I can see this tool can become dangerous if constantly applied to this high level of reflection. Part of me does still feel like I am doing this just because I've got to do this as part of the course. I do appreciate the benefits and at points it has helped me but this is the underlying thought mechanism*

This highlights the mixed levels of engagement and provides the impetus to rethink pedagogical approaches. In order to address this further, the next sections will focus on how reflective practice is used in FM and nursing.

3.5 Reflective Practice teaching in Facilities Management
The research has focused on the teaching practice in the FM discipline defined by the British Institute for Facilities Management (2014) as *"Facilities management is the integration of processes within an organisation to maintain and develop the agreed services which support and improve the effectiveness of its primary activities".*

Williams (2003) would argue that FM was a non-core service along with other support services such as HRM. They are not perceived to be the main organisational purpose, however after staff costs, generally an organisation's second highest cost is their estate, assets and the management of those. This suggests there needs to be professional strategic thinking and a joined up approach to deliver an estate that enables the business to deliver, often termed as "fit for purpose". No longer should the

Facility Manager be viewed as the caretaker but more, as Tranfield and Aklagahi (1995:7) stated, as *"A combined people, process and place manager capable of tuning into overall objectives to plan and deliver an environment conducive to successful work in any organisation".*

The above section clarifies the focus of facilities management; however there needs to be some consideration as to why reflective practice can benefit the facility manager. Research carried out by Bull and Ellison (2009) focused on two cohorts of professional students on the Undergraduate Certificate in Facilities Management within Sheffield Hallam University. One of the questions specifically used within the focus groups asked "How useful did the students find reflective practice?" Some of the responses included: *"I think for me it is the bigger picture, being able to think a little bit more strategically. Whereas opposed to just being reactive in your day to day duties, you're looking at the bigger picture and it's starting to open your mind a little bit as to why I do this, as to why we're looking [in] that direction. That's how it works for me at the moment"* (participant A). *"What surprised me is how my reflection changed over time, when I read that one I'd written, because I wrote it as soon as I left here to get my first thoughts and feelings out, but I did it again in two weeks and couldn't believe the difference"* (participant B).

This gives evidence that once students have been engaged with reflective practice for some time they begin to recognise the benefits and can evidence the changes to their personal practice in the workplace.

3.6 Reflective Practice in Nursing
It is important to note that reflective practice is routinely considered an important developmental area for clinical approaches used in nursing. Studies on health practitioners show nurses who utilise reflection as part of their practice provide better nursing care and have a greater understanding of their actions, thus developing their professional skills (Hansebo & Kihlgren, 2001). Chong (2009) iterates this point stating that nursing students perceive reflective practice as playing a major role in applying theory into nursing practice. Most studies in nursing suggest reflection is a meaningful activity area. Gustadsson & Fagerberg (2001) suggest reflection is a tool that promotes courage. When used it meets the unique needs of the patient and empowers the nurse. This is important as Mantzokas & Jasper (2004) in their interpretive study concluded that nurses felt reflection was of limited value due to the minimal power they had to initiate change. This echoes the views of SHU HRM students who anecdotally suggest they are limited by the organisation often feeling powerless to make or challenge changes.

3.7 Reflective Practice Research
There appears to be a growing need to rationalise reflective practice and the individual and organisational benefits that can be gained from this (Cornford, 2006). Cornford discusses the need for improved empirical evidence, however Gore (1987) would argue that quantitative measures cannot be used to measure reflective teaching outcomes. However, Tom and Valli (1990) would counter argue that there is a need to evidence that for example in teaching there needs to be a mixed methods approach in order to be able to evidence that goals have been achieved. Korthagen and Wubbels (1991) carried out research in an attempt to operationalise concepts of reflection in relation to the characteristics of a reflective practitioner. Their research focused on education students within Utrecht university. They used four studies to attempt to operationalise their concepts; the first study was a questionnaire to students and graduates and then interviews with 10 of the respondents; the second a longitudinal

study that followed 18 students, and this took more of a qualitative approach using interviews and video recordings; the third study involved questionnaires and the fourth study compared students from this particular course with graduates from another. Their findings, using these mixed methods approaches, highlighted the attributes of reflective practice teachers, but they still concluded that whilst there was an element of building blocks towards creating a theory and they also believed that there needed to be more sound empirical evidence to *"leave behind the realm of vague notions and beliefs about the benefits of reflective teaching" (Korthagen and Wubbels, 1991:19).*

Brown and McCartney (1995) demonstrate the effective use of reflective writing as a way of evaluating the effectiveness of a course but Askham (2004) recognised the issues with the approach of using reflective portfolios as any form of data in research as students, being aware that the portfolio is marked, will be aiming to deliver what they perceive the teacher wishes to see. Bull (2014) has recognised from their own engagement with reflective portfolios that the majority appear to be open and honest reflections on their learning journeys and the implications to their practice.

Friedman (2004) found that there was a link between formal education and improvement in the use of reflective practice, but also indicated that several personality traits were also relative to this engagement. Their research involved a personality traits test and subsequent interviews; a more mixed methods approach. They recognised that there were limitations to this research as it was a small sample based on female students

In learning organisations, reflection is often encouraged and van Woerkom and Croon (2008) focused their research on how we can operationalise the outcomes of using reflection within the workplace. There does appear to be limited research in relation to the outcomes of using reflective practice as identified above, and for van Woerkom and Croon (2008:319-321) they have attempted to do this using a literature review and a survey. Their key aspects following their literature review in relation to reflective work behaviour are reflective working; openness about mistakes; asking for feedback; experimentation; critical opinion sharing; challenging group think; and career awareness. These seven aspects were then explored using a survey approach, and quantitative data. From the authors' perspective, to have entered into statistical data in relation to reflective practice can be limited in relation to the subjective experiences of reflective practice and again the concept of "operationalising" refers back to Schön's (1983, 1991) technical rationality. Research in this area tends to be focused on action research or interviews in relation to reflective practice and personal learning or more quantitative approaches when trying to operationalise the benefits of reflective practice (van Woerkom and Croon, 2008 and Korthagen and Wubbels, 1991).

The methodology used in relation to reflective practice varies and this appears to be based on philosophical stances, and also whether there is a need to quantify the results in the form of empirical evidence.

4.0 Methodology
The paper presents research which took place at Sheffield Hallam University Business School. The first element was to conduct a literature review enabling some discussion and recommendations in relation to the delivery of reflective practice across business related courses. The second element drew on observations from teaching the part time HRM students on the MSc HRM, and the third element draws upon the doctoral research of Bull (2014), which examines responses of professional students that have completed an undergraduate programme in Facilities Management (FM). These students are mature professionals and the course is delivered via a blended style of

block teaching and distance learning.

The unstructured interviews were held with past students either face to face or via the telephone and were recorded and then transcribed. The interviews included an exploration of the individual's background and their current roles in FM. Following the understanding of the individuals as people there was further discussion on their use of reflective practice in the workplace post the course, and also whether they felt there were any benefits to learning how to use reflective practice. A simple discourse analysis was performed on the narrative in order to identify key themes and trends.

4.1 Teaching Reflective Practice in HRM at SHU
The teaching of reflective practice is situated on the part time MSc HRM as part of the "Developing skills for Business Leadership" module. The sessions are ad hoc throughout the duration of their course. The module is assessed at two stages in the module. This comprises of a 2500 word paper based upon 3 required portfolio entries. This is formatively assessed and not graded. This enables tutors to provide feedback on progress. The core task is the final portfolio comprising of 7 learning outcomes, a core requirement for the CIPD. The portfolio entries are:-

1. Demonstrate through practice the skills to manage themselves and interpersonal relationships in a professional context;
2. Develop the ability to solve problems and make decisions based on sound judgements grounded in practical experience and theory;
3. Critically evaluate and apply the research and theory in the field of reflective / reflexive practice and continuous professional development;
4. Demonstrate the capability to manage and interpret financial resources and information technology;
5. Apply effective leadership and team working skills in the management of people;
6. Demonstrate competence in postgraduate study skills;
7. Act ethically with a demonstrated commitment to equality of opportunity and diversity in all aspects of professional and personal practice.

The Portfolio word count is 5000 words (+/-10%). Students are asked to keep a reflective journal for the duration of the course to record key experiences and learning including modules, study blocks and residential on the duration of the course. This enables them to use extracts from the journal within the portfolio to demonstrate professional and personal development.

The CIPD state that the purpose of the module is to encourage learners to develop a strong sense of self-awareness and explore their own strengths and weaknesses as managers and colleagues. The module focus is to develop and improve a range of definable skills which are perceived to aid their management practice and develop effective leadership. The module seeks to encourage postgraduate study skills and critical reflection on theory and practice from an ethical and professional standpoint.

The sessions for this module include a range of activities such as, tutor led sessions exploring developing professional and personal practice , learning forums, expert guest speakers designed to provide knowledge and demonstrate the usefulness of reflective practice and praxis, student facilitated learning sets to develop learner autonomy.

The issue with much of the approaches outlined is that anecdotally the students dislike the portfolio and diary. They struggle with how some of the learning outcomes relate to their individual practice, particularly the Finance and IT element.

4.2 Teaching Reflective Practice in FM at SHU
On the undergraduate certificate in FM students submit two assessments, a piece of reflective writing and then a reflective portfolio as part of the Reflective Practice for FM module. The first assessment is based on a workshop activity in relation to FM that is delivered in the first block and they have to submit a 1500 word reflection on this, outlining their learning, their strengths and limitations recognised during the full day workshop activity and also recognising areas for development. The portfolio includes five learning outcomes including communication skills, problem solving abilities, identification of strengths and limitations and areas for personal development and use of feedback. They are encouraged to reflect on not only the learning on the course but also the impact of this learning to their practice using specific examples as evidence. The reflective practice module is the first module delivered on their first block followed by submission of their portfolio 18 months later. The students attend the university every 3 months for a block study, and at each touch point they are reminded about the reflective portfolio, with an interim submission approximately 12 months in and also a reflective practice workshop at their final block. Anecdotally the portfolios represent evidence of engagement and learning, and also a strong change in mindset from the beginning of the course to see the benefits of reflective practice. To engage the students with reflective writing in the first instance they are encouraged to write an account of an incident of work, explaining the situation what happened, and the outcome and then chat this through with one of their peers. Following this there is a lecture, discussion and workshop on reflective practice and the students revisit the first account which was written descriptively and they are then encourage to write this as a reflective account, drawing more on the impact on themselves and their learning from the experience. Throughout the course, each module requires the student to hone their reflective practice skills through either summative assessment or action learning in the classroom; reflecting on their own performance in practice.

4.3 Interviews
Drawing on unstructured interviews carried out by Bull (2014) some initial themes have emerged from their engagement with reflective practice and the impact this has had on their work practice. These included the initial engagement with reflective practice and their feelings of "relevance" to their profession at the outset, to the learning they have taken both from a personal and professional perspective, and how to engage students in reflective practice from the start of the course.

4.4 Initial engagement
As discussed in the literature review, engaging students in reflective practice can often be the hardest point, some of the comments below concur with Smith (2001) in relation to engagement and understanding.

Interviewee A stated that *"I was a bit of a sceptic of reflective practice four years ago and it makes me smile when I read the stuff that I wrote years ago to what it is now … I think about what went well and what didn't go well now [at work]… I also try and think how people perceive me which I would never have done before"* (Bull, 2014)
Interviewee B recognised that they were *"a naturally reflective person"* and therefore engaging with reflection had already been part of their upbringing being the youngest of six children *"you learned what you did had a consequence and that you could change the outcome by thinking about what you did… you learn to have that bit more self-awareness about what you do"* (Bull, 2014)
Interviewee C stated that reflective practice was not something they engaged with in the work place but *"having done the first part of the uni course … it has become a big part of how I work and how I treat other people now.. I never thought about reflective*

practice before the uni course, and now it is something that I think about a lot and it is something that I am starting do almost as second nature." (Bull, 2014)
Interviewee D recognised their use of reflective practice in the workplace now although they stated that if they had been asked this four years ago *"I would have looked at you gone out".* When asked how they had felt about the concept of reflective practice. *"it was interesting because initially you think oh what is this crap, to be honest. What is this tosh we are doing now? But then you sit down and you start writing it and in our infancy … you are going through stuff and you haven't really got a grasp of what it is all about and then you suddenly sit back and you reflect upon the reflection because you are driving home and you are thinking oh yes, I see the point there and you start matching it with the things you have done and probably unknowingly, you have reflected but you haven't realised you have reflected." (Bull, 2014)*

There does appear to be a need for students to understand how this relates to their particular discipline and this means as lecturers there is a need to ensure the subject can be related to in some way; so if we are teaching FM or HRM students perhaps showing case studies, or real life examples of how reflective practice can influence and help practice in a 'real' way would aid understanding and engagement from the outset.

4.5 Personal and Professional learning
Operationalizing reflective practice, as discussed in the literature review, can feel positivistic in its approach if researchers try to draw on statistical evidence. However the students interviewed drew on the changes to their personal behaviours and professional practice to evidence

Interviewee A discussed the difference that colleagues had seen in them *"my senior HR Manager who has known me since she interviewed me when I started working here has said you have changed"* The recognition of the interviewees behaviour and approach to people has become very different and realised a promotion *"I wouldn't have been considered for this now showing the behaviours that I did four years ago because it is not in keeping with the culture or what they expect of managers".* Interviewee C reflected on how her team see her now and they said *"I am different now to how I was a year ago. I said different good or different bad and they said different good!"* When questioned further about reflective practice and her changes she acknowledged that rather than rushing into decisions without hearing any of her team she *"now reflects on what the outcome is going to be and how to achieve it".*

When engaging students in reflective practice, whether they be practitioners already, or undergraduate students; there needs to be a safe environment with opportunity to draw on not only professional skills but also personal development. (Rush-Sahd, 2003)

5.0 Discussion and impact on teaching reflective practice across multi-disciplines
Drawing on the above literature and anecdotal evidence from teaching in health and FM there are multiple areas for the HRM team to consider. The potential for empowerment through reflective activities is considered by Ghaye in Ghaye et al (2000), Emancipation and empowerment are also considered in Moon (1999) in a discussion of the purposes and potential outcomes for reflection. In summary these are to consider the process of our own learning; critically review something; build theory from observations; engage in personal or self-development; and empower or emancipate ourselves (Moon, 1999:23) This is echoed in health care sector where empowerment is key (Caldwell and Grobbel, 2013).

In relation to the delivery of the reflective practice module on the FM course, the first 4 elements of these are addressed not only through the module but across the course which does ask students to use their reflection across several modules to aid in their critique of organisational practice.

Fortune (2004) discusses the need to *"provide students with a clear statement of purpose for their reflective activities."* Whilst this is made explicit in the HRM portfolio guidance this needs to be an iterative process. There is also a need to ensure we are seeking the views of students currently on our programmes to understand theory, experience of, and engagement in reflective practice and this paper leads us to advance the research into a broader study of more reflective practice modules delivered with Sheffield Hallam University to better understand the issues with engagement. There also needs to be further consideration of how we assess reflective practice modules. As Fortune (2004) discussed in her research if we consider that assessment strongly influences what students do, then the module requirements and method of assessment need to be linked to the motivation of the learner (Boud, 1996; Bourner, 2003).

From the interviews with the FM students, the reflective practice has enabled them to review their own personal behaviours but also their working practice. This can be seen in part within the HRM portfolios yet as the anecdotal evidence shown in the earlier part of this paper; students have reported not realising how much they have changed until they have come to put all their reflective commentary into the portfolio; and this becomes a powerful reflective tool in itself.

One of the main issues that the FM students have always been keen to establish is who reads the portfolios, quite often these can be very deep in their reflection and the material feels very sensitive to their own personal growth, and therefore this needs to be made clear to students from the start. This is also reflected in HRM students due to the nature of their roles.

Ruth-Sahd (2003) discussed teaching reflective practice in nursing education and the need to ensure the environment is safe, open and honest and trusting to further enhance reflective practice engagement. Davies (1995:167) qualitative research study to examine 6 first year nursing students identified that *"the reflective processes of clinical debriefing and journaling did impact the environment, the process and the focus of learning."* More interestingly, as the students were engaged with each other, there was less anxiety and also higher levels of active learning. Ruth-Sahd (2003) reinforces the need to ensure that students understand the reason for reflective practice and also state the teaching staff must create a safe environment to allow this to happen.

6.0 Conclusion
This paper is the first stage of research on HRM students at SHU. Currently the research has focused on documentary evidence taken from their portfolios. The analysis of the literature and a comparison with SHU student comments taken from these portfolios has highlighted issues with engagement and a degree of negativity to reflection. An issue is that they see reflection as too introspective and use strong narratives suggesting that *"over thinking can be dangerous"*. Without further research this cannot be addressed. These are deep seated individual perceptions, which may or may not be shared. This highlights a need for further research.

The students on the part time MSc HRM are similar to the FM students, they are professionals who may have some previous experience of higher education or whom

are being sponsored by their companies to gain the CIPD qualification which is part of the course outcomes. Whilst they have similar work statuses they are dissimilar by not engaging in reflective practice often stating it is too time consuming or lacks purpose.

An exploration of the approaches used in FM and health teaching and literature has provided two clear areas of future focus to our pedagogy. The initial element is on preparing the students for reflection. The emphasis is to emulate the approach used in FM and in nursing to provide reflection as a pragmatic process and to utilise models which can be are tool based and can be applied practically.

An approach for our initial introduction is to delineate teaching of reflection into the differing levels of reflection suggested by Zeichner and Liston (1996) who propose five different levels where reflection occurs. These are rapid reflection; repair; review; research; and retheorizing and reformulating.

These levels relate to the teaching of reflection, however, they are useful as they are action based and less focussed on emotions and feelings, an area that HRM students particularly dislike anecdotally. Addressing this would link more appropriately to the emphasis and focus outlined in the CIPD requirements and emulates the FM approach which suggests that use of reflection is tool-based.

It is important to address our pedagogical approaches to teaching reflective learning as it is not always best placed and needs to be integrated into other parts of the curriculum. There needs to be a focus on assimilation of reflection in other elements of the HR courses as there is with the FM course.

Whilst most of the HRM students recognise the possible advantages of reflective practice as they engaged with learning, the issue is perhaps performance based. Often they discussed issues such as having little or no time for writing down their feelings. This can be attitudinal however it could also be a reality as they are time poor professionals. A clear barrier appears to be getting students to go beyond description and towards a deeper scrutiny. This could be the levels of introspection which veer away from their stoic approach to work. This may be dictated by the unitary nature of the workplace and the demands on HR to enforce and negotiate rules and behaviours in the workspace (Dunlop, 1958, Crouch, 1993). Thus this may relate to a tension in teaching approaches rather than the students themselves i.e. if they perceive themselves as pragmatists then the advantages may already be limited. Thus an area for teaching to address is how we link learning to practice. Lastly a core element will be on how we approach delivery to suit specific cohorts.

Moon (2004:130) refers to the *"student's perception of the task that influences the approach, not the reality of it!"* Does more need to be done so they see the task of the PT HRM portfolio in a different way? The portfolio task itself is somewhat mixed, students often need lots of guidance about the relevance of such theories and their link to practice. The CIPD do not necessarily offer research evidence to support their conviction that reflective learning is important to HR management practice. The requirement of such a formal assessment has had an impact on engagement. Anecdotal evidence suggests that they feel they are being forced to reflect thus it is likely to be less effective.

The research has highlighted gaps in the teaching approach at SHU and further research is required to guide pedagogical approaches.

7.0 Limitations
The study took place within a single course within the faculty, with understanding therefore limited to the location. The research is part of wider doctoral studies; exploration into HR and management practice (Taylor) and reflective practice (Bull) and this will culminate in further research papers on this area.

8.0 Future Research
Research exists to address some of the above limitations as discussed above. Further studies need to address a more detailed research with HRM students and also the wider university in the delivery of reflective practice teaching across multi-disciplinary courses. The aim is to conduct interpretative studies to establish perceptions of the teaching of reflection. This will involve exploration with educators, professional bodies and the students. This is purposeful as most studies concentrate on the student experience.

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