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Why and when should you reflect?

Why should learners reflect and when should learners reflect? Well, if I can take the why first, which I think is really important, it encourages learners to enter into what we call double loop learning and reflection is an integral part of that. It also helps them to develop their research skills and it also helps students to think about the best and worst of their practices and for them to make real improvements about what it is that they can do in practice. Sometimes we can get stuck on the negative in terms of what we do. If we can reflect we have an opportunity to actually change that, so it's a very empowering learning tool that helps us to understand what is significant for us in our practice, help us to see ourselves in our practice objectively, help us to research and test out new ways of practicing and help us to make real improvements in terms of what we do. So I think it's essential for anybody who wants to develop their skills working with the public and making sure that they do the very best that they can while they are in practice.

When should they do this? Well, as often as possible, but they have to have a commitment to reflection. Reflection often is a process and it can be a long term process, so it needs time and it needs energy so people should reflect, students should be encouraged to reflect when they feel as if they have time to do it, when they feel ready to do it, when they feel ready to take a risk, when there might be other people available to help them with their reflection.