



REFLECTIVE WRITING

Purpose

Reflective writing or a Reflective Essay critically discusses personal experience and opinion in light of broader literature, theories or subject materials. **Conventions and expectations may differ across contexts, so always check expectations about the format with your lecturer or tutor.**

Structure

Description	Interpretation	Outcome
<p>Describe the selected experience, practice or theory.</p> <p>Explain clearly:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What happened? • What was I doing/ involved in? When? Where? • What did you observe? • What seems significant to pay attention to? <p>If you are reflecting on a written text you might attempt to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examine how the writer’s prior experience has shaped his or her views. Does this affect the validity of the ideas presented? 	<p>Write a personal response that reflects your overall assessment of what happened by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explaining how the practice specifically links to your own experiences or emerging practice or existing theory? • Explaining what specifically worked (or didn’t work)? • Describing how you felt, and what made you feel that way? How did others respond, and what made them feel that way. • Reflecting on how the experience connects with your own knowledge, understanding or practice? And in what ways? • Providing an explanation for what happened? How does the relevant theory, literature and/or research inform your thinking about this. • Considering the ideas in terms of their logic, usefulness, theoretical soundness and implications. <p>It is acceptable to provide an opinion but it must be supported with evidence or examples.</p> <p>If your reflection relates to observation, link what you observed to your own ideas about your own emerging practice</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In summary, what do you think about this situation/ experience or practice? • What conclusions can you draw? How can you justify these? • In hindsight, would you do something differently next time and why? • How has your participation or experiences shaped your own understanding of the discipline? • How has the experience impacted on or shaped your understanding of ... • What new questions have emerged for you as a result of your reflections? • What have you learnt about yourself as a learner? • What are the take home messages you have uncovered in relation to the topic, concept or theory? • What actions result? <p>How could you use this reflection to further develop your practice or understanding in the future?</p>

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Academic Language for Reflection

"...This was quite possibly due to ... Alternatively,..."

"...The problem here, I believe, was the fact that..."

"...While it may be true that..."

"...On the one hand, ..., yet on the other..."

"...In thinking back, ... On reflection, ..."

"...I guess that being like X has made me aware of..."

It is acceptable to use the personal pronoun 'I' in reflective writing, as long as it is not overly used. Always attempt to vary your sentence beginnings.

Discipline Examples

[Guidance, Counselling and Careers Development](#)

Useful Links

Models of Reflection

<http://libguides.jcu.edu.au/c.php?g=162385&p=1066932>

Reflective Practice

<http://libguides.jcu.edu.au/counselling?p=1065117>

Reflective Writing: a basic introduction

https://www.jcu.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0004/120478/jcu_128366.pdf

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