

Analysing Reflective Writing

Instructions

Read the reflections on each of the following pages

Use the **What->So What->What Next** structure to explore and evaluate the relative strengths of each of the three example reflections.

The method which you should use is to take the text of the examples and copy and paste them under the appropriate headings

Finally write your own brief evaluation of the account. What are the strengths of each of the reflections, what are their weaknesses? You might like to use the assessment criteria that we use for the portfolio as some guidance for your own evaluation.

	A (70-100) A+, A, A-	B (55-69) B+, B, B-	C (40-54) C+, C, C-	D (<40) D/Fail
Self-reflection	Student shows clear evidence of self-reflection. Student is able to identify any issues has taken measures to overcome them A forward plan exists	Student shows evidence of self- Student is able to identify any issues and has identified measures to overcome them, but not undertaken them as yet	Student provides a descriptive account of the area. No real evaluation of issues or measures to overcome them	Insufficient content. Little or no attempt to address any problems

What you can learn

The objective of this exercise is to provide you with a chance to understand individually the difference between a strong reflection, and an account which is more descriptive

You can choose to submit this task.

Reflections of a business studies student on placement

The placement is in The Black Bull in Grentown.

Chris, the student, has been at the placement for only a few days. They have been asked to wait on the tables at lunchtime.

Today the pub was full and many people wanted lunch. I think that Mr Freddings (the manager) was a bit caught out because it had been very quiet the last few days and he had told two of the regular lunchtime staff not to bother to come in until later. I helped out in the kitchen this morning – washing up and doing some cleaning up. Jan, the cook, said that I would be needed to wait at the tables. I was a bit shocked because I had not done this before. I was embarrassed when she took me out and told me what to do in front of some of the customers, but I suppose I did need to know. I was left in a situation in which some customers knew that I am new to this, and others did not. On the whole, I decided to pretend that I had been doing it all my life. Jan told me how to write down what people order very quickly, and told me her type of shorthand which I have been trying to use. On the whole it seems to work, - I did make one or two mistakes when I had to go back to the customers and ask again what they wanted again. One customer was really nice when this happened because she had seen me being taught what to do. Another, a bit later, was quite abrupt. I guess that I had become a little over-confident by then. I backed off and realised that I have a lot to learn even in this simple matter of taking orders and bringing out the food.

A bit later there was a difficult incident that I got involved in. There was a party of three women – I think that they work at the big company that makes furniture up the road. They had booked but were a bit late and, because it was quite busy by then, we had to tell them that they would have to wait for their meal for a bit. They grumbled and then ordered. Then it got really busy and cook could really hardly cope so it made it even longer that they had to wait. She asked me to go and tell them they would have to wait even longer. She told me what to say – to be polite but firm and not to get drawn into stuff about how they had booked – because, as she said, it was their fault because they were late. Anyway, the women treated me as if it was my fault. I fell apart a bit, not sure what to say apart from sorry lots of times. I got away and went back to the kitchen. By then Mr Freddings had come in and he and Jan had decided to offer the women some food that could be served up straight away. I wished they could have thought of it earlier. Again, I had to take out the message. The women were cross and made a huge fuss about not wanting the food on offer, and said how the pub had gone down-hill and it used not to be like that. I just had to stand and listen and wished I had not pretended to have been there all my life. It all made me feel upset especially when, at last, grudgingly they said they would have the food.

I brought out their meals and now they were all smiles because they thought they had got a bargain because what they had been given was more expensive. They were nice to me then and left quite a tip. I think I learnt quite a bit about waiting all in a short time.

These are some of the things that I learnt from today...(she lists 6 topics).....

Reflection on study habits over the last semester

The student, Kerry, is in level 2 on a Biology programme. They have been asked to reflect on her progress in study in the previous semester by her tutor and to bring the piece she has written to the tutorial. This is part of the personal professional planning initiative in the university.

In the summer at the end of my first year of uni, I travelled all around Europe. I had always wanted to do that and felt that I had to come back before I was ready. I got back to uni two days late and I felt unsettled for a while after because it seemed that everyone had got into ruts of studying before I could. I missed a few lectures in the first two weeks – none of it seemed to have any meaning. I thought about leaving but my parents were wild when I said that that I thought I had better try to settle down.

We had lots of work to do at that stage for the first genetics module. You can't afford to get behind in that and I was behind. I had to go to Dr Spolan and tell him I couldn't do it. He was really helpful which made me feel a lot better. He said he knew several of us would have difficulty and set up a surgery with some of the postgraduate students. Mostly they were good, though sometimes they did not have much idea of just how hard I found it. Somehow they could not always explain. Anyway, I seem to have caught up now and passed the exam.

I think I have difficulty writing essays. I can't seem to organise my ideas in the way that tutors want. I think I have done it and then get comments about there not being proper discussions and conclusions to what I write. I am not sure that anyone has ever told me how to write an essay – you just have to guess. I did buy a study skills book for science students and that helped me because it had examples, even from biology. It also helped me with referencing. I have always been confused about how much you can put down of someone else's work without it being plagiarism. I know we had some rules about plagiarism in the course handbook, but when you are in the middle of an essay, with a really relevant book in front of you, it seems difficult to see how to apply the rules. Can you, for example, put down quite a big chunk of someone else's work if it says exactly what you want to say yourself? It would have a reference put after it of course. I think I need some help on this.

We have multiple choice questions for the first biology methods module. I was not sure how to revise for an exam like that. We ended up making up questions and testing each other on the answers. I did find that I did not seem to need to understand the ideas that were put over in the questions – I thought I could just guess at the kinds of questions and make sure that I had the answers. I did not do all that well in the exam so maybe I need to prepare differently - but I really don't know how to do it. I will need to ask .

Anyway, I think that deciding to stay on at uni was a good idea and as the term goes on, I feel more settled.

Reflection on a skills module

Jo is on a level 1 skills module, and has just given a presentation as part of that module and has been asked to assess how they got on in a reflective manner as part of the assessment of the module.

I have just done a presentation in front of our group. We were asked to choose any subject this time but next time we will be giving a presentation on a topic associated with our subject. I choose to talk about my adventure sailing holiday in Scotland. I was third to go. I was nervous because the last time I gave a presentation was at school and then I knew everyone well. This is a new module so I do not yet know people. There were 6 of us, and the tutor.

I talked about the journey up to Scotland – and how we missed the train and then could not find the boat we were going on. People seemed to be listening. I talked about the first day of sailing. It was windy and I told them how I was a bit scared – then there were two days when we did not go anywhere because it was so rough. We then did get some sailing and went to several islands. There were adders on the islands so we had to wear boots if we walked on the heather. It made me very nervous about going onto the land.

I talked for the six minutes that was required. I fitted in most of what I had to say. I then had to ask if anyone had any questions. There were three questions. Sam asked how old the boat was and I told him that it was built in 1910. Beckie asked where we sailed from and Dr Smythe asked if we had to be the crew and pull ropes. I told him that we were the crew and that over the week I began to learn which ropes did what to the boat.

Then it was over. I think I did the presentation well and people listened. I do not think that I would do anything differently next time.