

Reflective Writing

Reflective writing tasks are designed to help you think deeply about what happened in a particular situation in which you were involved, and why. Your experiences provide a lens through which you can observe, describe, and improve your professional practice when you consider them alongside key theories in your field and course materials, whether they are from placements, internships, part-time employment, volunteering, or project work.

Reflective language

In reflective writing, you will typically use first-person language, as the focus is on your own experiences, thoughts, and responses. It is appropriate to use expressions such as "I observed," "I felt," or "I learned," to clearly convey your perspective. This personal voice is an important feature of reflective writing, but it should still be balanced with academic conventions, including clear structure and, where required, links to theory or evidence.

How do I reflect?

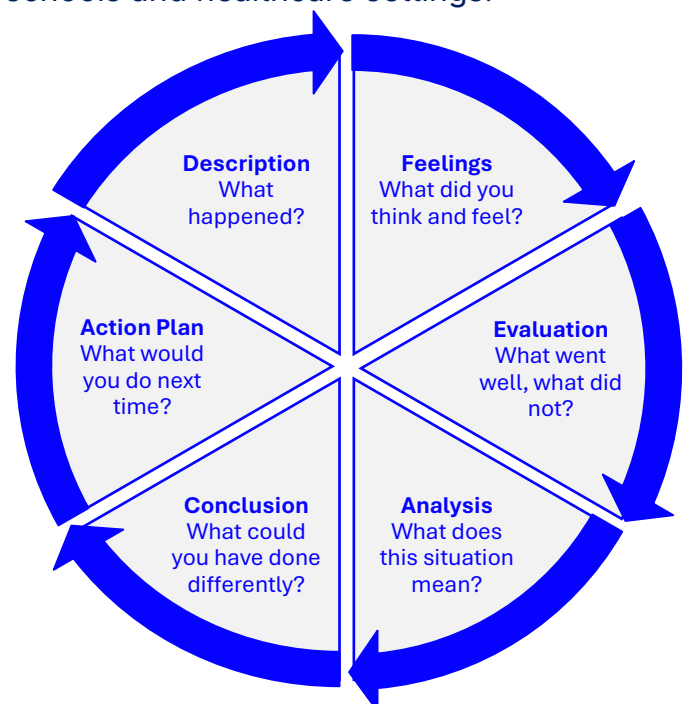
There are several ways to approach reflective writing, but all share three core components: **(1)** describing the event, **(2)** analysing your thoughts and feelings about it, and **(3)** identifying actions for future improvement. Reflective models can break this process down in different ways.

- **Gibbs' Reflective Cycle**
(description → feelings → evaluation → analysis → conclusion → action plan)
- **Driscoll's Model**
(what? → so what? → now what?)
- **ERA Model**
(experience → reflection → action)

Nursing and Education commonly use Gibbs' Reflective Cycle, which is well suited to reflecting on placements in contexts such as schools and healthcare settings.

Gibbs' Cycle of Reflection

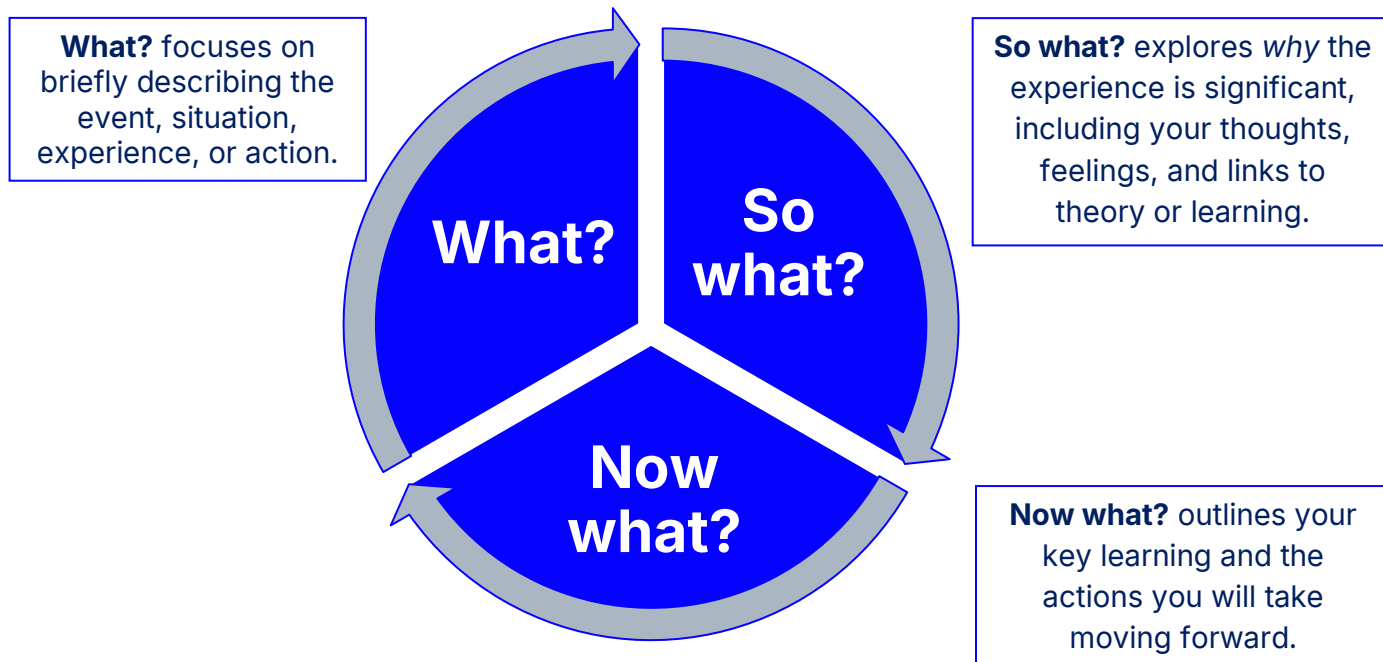
A structured approach to reflection helps us gain deeper insight into our experiences and supports ongoing improvement. Gibbs' Cycle is designed for workplace reflection, offering guided questions that provide a clear framework to follow. It encourages us to analyse our actions, identify strengths and areas for development, and consider how our performance can be enhanced. By describing an experience, critically evaluating it, and identifying specific actions for improvement, we create a set of clear, achievable goals—effectively forming a commitment to our own development and professional practice.



Other disciplines may also use Gibbs' Cycle, or allow you to draw on alternative reflective models such as Driscoll's Model or the ERA Model. Be sure to *check* with your lecturer or the unit guidelines to determine whether a specific model is required for your assessment.

Driscoll's Model

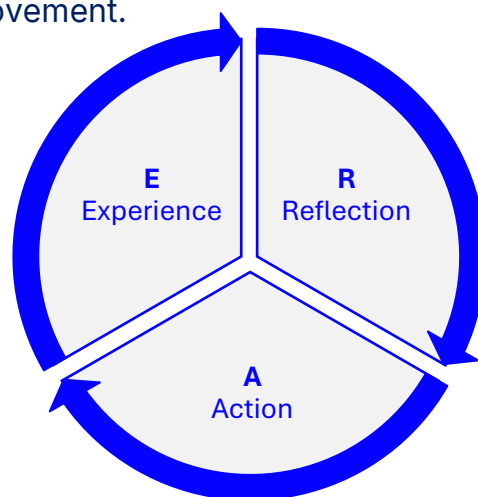
This model is a simple framework that guides reflection through three key questions, to help you describe, analyse, and apply your learning.



ERA Model

This model is a straightforward framework that guides you to describe an experience, reflect on its meaning, and identify actions for future improvement.

- **Experience:**
What happened, where and when did it occur, and what aspects were involved?
- **Reflection:**
What did you feel at that point of the situation? Could you have responded differently? What learning can you take from this experience?
- **Action:**
What would you do if a similar situation arose again?



Related Helpsheets

- Reflective Writing: Prompts
- Reflective Writing: Phrases



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