Reflective Writing

CITS5206
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SEEK WISDOM

Reflective Writing

Reflective writing gives you an opportunity to think deeply about something you've learned or an experience you've had.

Reflective writing needs to go beyond simply summarising what happened. Your reader needs to gain an insight into what the experience meant to you, how you ***feel*** about it, how it ***connects*** to other things you've experienced or studied and what you plan to ***do*** in response.

[Uni Melbourne Reflective Writing]

Reflective Writing

At a basic level, a reflective approach involves you asking yourself the following three questions:

1. What happened?

2. So what?
   Why is it important or interesting?
   Why do I need to reflect on it?

3. Now what?
   What action do I take to improve the situation
        or make a positive situation even better?

[Monash Uni, IT: Reflective Writing]

Structure of a **Professional Reflection**

- The next slide shows a model (Gibbs, 1988) to help you think and write reflectively in IT.

- Models like this are designed to help you go deeper into the experience or situation that triggers the reflection, in order to create new understanding and ultimately gain greater awareness of self and others.

- [Monash Uni, IT: Reflective Writing]

Gibbs' Reflective Cycle

Description

Feelings

Evaluation

Analysis

Conclusion

Action Plan
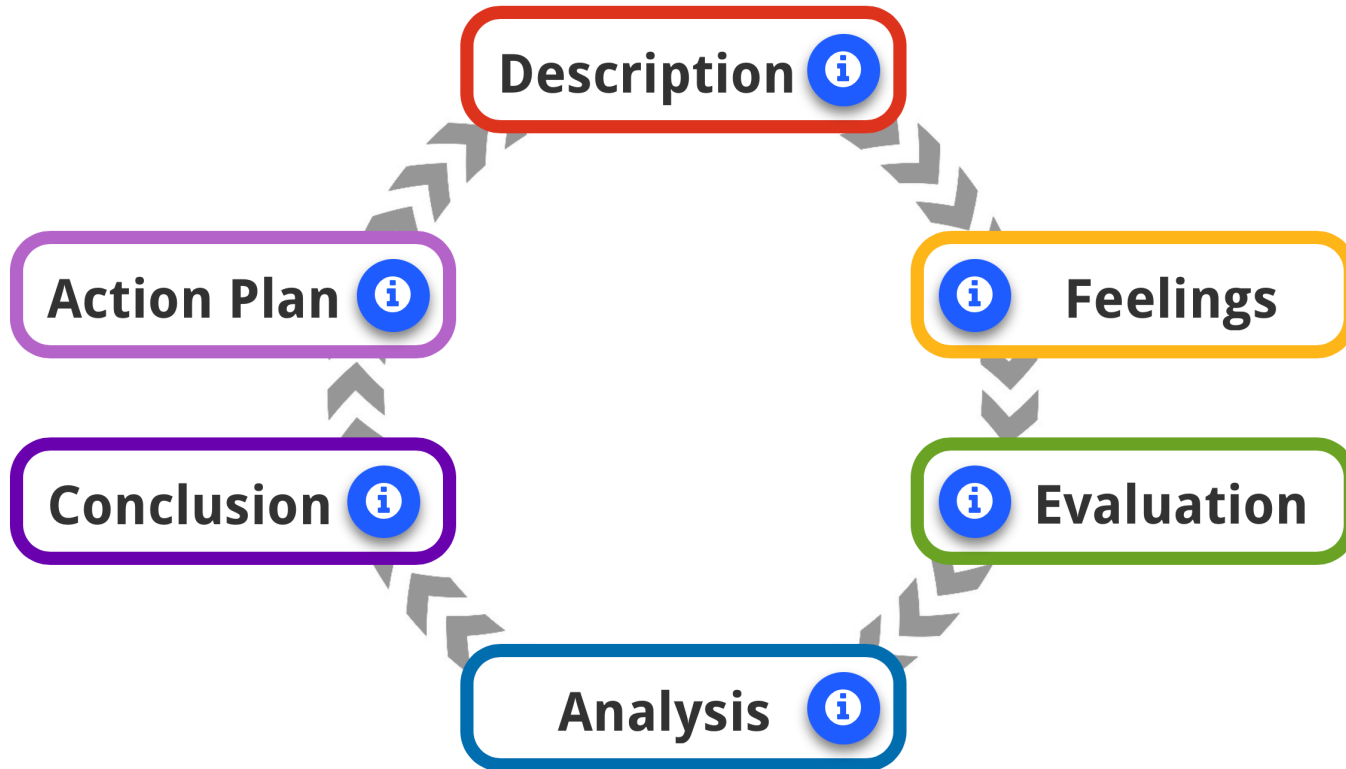
What is required for Reflective Writing?

- Reflection in IT requires you to **analyse** your descriptions of experiences or observations.

- Analysis communicates **what you have learned** from your reflections, and how it relates to the theories and concepts you've been learning about in the unit and the course.

- However, students may find reflective writing difficult.

[Monash Uni, IT: Reflective Writing]

A Common Mistake

The most common mistake students make is that they write **descriptions** of their experiences, rather than **reflections** on

- how their experiences were
- how they felt
- what they learned, and
- how they might do better next time if a similar situation arises.

[Monash Uni, IT: Reflective Writing]

How your reflective writing will be assessed

- Describes experience
- Feelings and Evaluation
- Action Plan

- See the Marking Rubric for details:

https://teaching.csse.uwa.edu.au/units/CITS5206/markingrubrics/CITS5206-Individual-Reflection-Marking-Rubric.xlsx

1. What happened?

In general, our group worked efficiently and cooperated pleasantly in the last five weeks. Team members not only expressed their own opinions actively, but also listened to others' ideas carefully and patiently. Each team member completed their assigned tasks without delay. In addition, each group member has a variety of skills that can contribute this project. …

MARKING CRITERIA	Undeveloped (0-1)
Describes Experience: Describes a specific incident, activity or example upon which you are reflecting.	Poor identification of a relevant and specific incident, activity or example for reflection

Good observations about the group, but it does not identify a specific event for reflection

1. What happened?

- After the first client meeting in Week 3 when it was made clear to us that we can choose a tech stack of our own, we entered the Storming phase where one teammate was really set on using Angular framework using the TypeScript programming language which no other team member was familiar with. He was very inclined on using it that he actually started developing and pushed the code to GitHub even before the team had a chance to discuss the skills we possess …

MARKING CRITERIA	Skilled (4-5)
Describes Experience: Describes a specific incident, activity or example upon which you are reflecting.	Clear description of a specific case, with focus on the specific aspects that challenge the student.

2. So what?

Most importantly, we noticed that we are too polite and respectful to each other. We will post our preliminary work on group chat and seek for improvements. However, normally we will just give good feedback. We believe we should provide more constructive feedback to our teammates instead of just mentioning the good things. This can improve our overall quality of work.

MARKING CRITERIA	Developing (2-3)
Feelings and Evaluation: Interprets what happened. Describes your intellectual and emotional response to the experience.	Some reflection that interprets what happened, questions responses and considers alternatives.

This is a very good observation. But it is too general – it does not interpret a particular event, and it does not discuss the writer's response to the event

2. So what?

I personally felt that there are differences in what each teammate understood the problem statement to be. I felt the project involved not only making visualization but also some data analysis for the project to be useful to the client. However, I faced some disagreements with the team.

MARKING CRITERIA	Skilled (4-5)
Feelings and Evaluation: Interprets what happened. Describes your intellectual and emotional response to the experience.	Clear and focused description of the feelings, thoughts and questions raised at the time of the experience and upon reflection. How did it make you feel? How did you find it? E.g. challenging, interesting, surprising, frustrating? What made you feel that way? What was positive and negative about it? What was its significance?

3. Now what?

Often this is a missing section – the reflection finishes without any insights or plans for the future.

MARKING CRITERIA	Undeveloped (0-1)
Action Plan: What did you learn from this experience? How might you do better next time if a similar experience arises?	Little indication of what was learned from the experience or how student will use the insights and skills gained in the future

3. Now what?

… So I was partially right and partially wrong. By the end of that meeting, I and my team had a clear and consistent understanding of what the project is about and what we need to do. The next week, the team came together to break down the problem and entered the Norming stage. (after Forming and Storming)

MARKING CRITERIA	Skilled (4-5)
Action Plan: What did you learn from this experience? How might you do better next time if a similar experience arises?	Analyses how this experience is going to influence your actions/practice in the future. Suggests what would you do differently based on what you have learnt.

References for Further Reading

- https://students.unimelb.edu.au/academic-skills/explore-our-resources/developing-an-academic-writing-style/reflective-writing#practice

- https://students.unimelb.edu.au/academic-skills/explore-our-resources/developing-an-academic-writing-style/reflective-writing#practice

- https://www.uwa.edu.au/students/-/media/Project/UWA/UWA/Students/Docs/STUDYSmarter/A7-Reflective-writing.pdf

In-Class Exercise for Formative Feedback

1. Identify an event or activity for reflection from your experience in CITS5206 so far

2. Make some bullet points about each of the 3 parts of the reflection (What happened; So what; Now what)

3. Review and Select (that is, make a first draft)

4. Self-assess your draft (use the marking rubric)

5. Seek feedback from your peers and lecturer