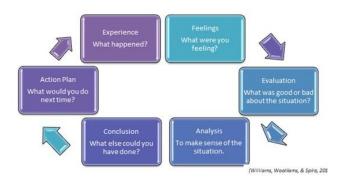# REFLECTIVE WRITING (MBA)

What is reflective writing?

Reflective assessments require students to think critically by reflecting on their own worldview or performance. This type of essay challenges students to reflect on what they do, how they do it, their values and beliefs, and the potential implications of these beliefs and values on others (critical reflection and self-awareness). Importantly, reflective writing needs to create links from personal experience to course concepts, theories, and information from sources.

Gibb's (1988) framework of reflective learning

(Williams, Woolliams, & Spiro, 201

Assessment types

You may be asked to think and write reflectively in a variety of assessment types including:

- Reflective Essays
- Case Studies
- Plans
- Reviews
- Analyses

You may be instructed to reflect on your skills, your leadership style, a past project, a difficult conversation or what you have learned during a particular task.

Elements of reflective writing

First person pronouns

Non-reflective academic writing requires the use of objective third-person pronouns, nouns, and sentence structures. However, in a reflective paper, you may use first-person pronouns (I, me, my) when describing your experience, observations, and plans.

Academic example

Transparency in business is the basis for trust between all stakeholders.

Reflective example in first person

The notion of transparency challenged the assumptions I had about my leadership style.

Various tenses

While in traditional academic papers, you are most likely to use the present tense when describing theory, reflective tasks will require the use of a combination of past, present, and future tenses depending on the purpose of your sentence.

Academic example

Management is a discipline that consists of a set of five general functions: planning, organising, staffing, leading and controlling.

Reflective example in past and future

During this project I focused on my planning skills.

The tools mentioned above will help me achieve my professional goals.

Sample Reflection

Andler (2016) states that information gathering is a crucial step of the problem-solving process. Understanding the importance of clarification is central to my understanding of project management (PM) and problem solving as it underpins my use of PM tools and techniques. Asking clarifying questions about types of work resources and material resources allows me to identify what resources are needed for project effectiveness. Designating who or what is accountable for accomplishing tasks in a project schedule is possible only if project parameters are clarified through questions. Therefore, as a next step I will aim to seek clarification through detailed questioning during the information gathering phase.

A major benefit of understanding the critical role of questioning in project management is that it might give me more confidence when asking questions. In my past job as a project manager, I traditionally would not feel able to question my superiors in projects. I would try to establish the requirements and resources in some other way and avoid asking questions by transferring lessons learned from one situation to another. I was able to do this by using a framework for analysis by Crawford and Pollack (2004) as a predictive aid to resourcing. However, I now understand that in my role as a project manager I am required to determine the dimensions and resources of a project. Knowing the role of questioning to achieve objective clarity for a specific purpose is valuable as it is integral to the success of the project. This new realisation will be useful throughout my studies and in my future professional life by enabling me to question my own assumptions. I will now endeavour to clarify the critical aspects of project planning by using a questioning technique that allows for understanding project dimensions. In my practice as a project manager I will use questioning to clarify the project goals and objectives with all stakeholders.

Adapted from: https://emedia.rmit.edu.au/learninglab/content/sample-reflection

Annotations (right margin):
- Topic sentence presenting theory
- Interpretation (How does this relate to your field?)
- Reflection (What have you learnt? What were your ideas previously? How has your thinking changed?)
- Link to theory
- Reflection (How will you utilise what you have learnt in the future?)

Examples of reflective language

Use these sentence starters to address the Four Rs of Reflection:

1. **Report / Respond**: include a brief description of the situation and state your reaction.
2. **Relate**: make a connection between the situation and your own personal experience.
3. **Reason**: find an explanation for the event by linking practice to theory.
4. **Reconstruct**: identify any changes or improvements for future planning.

For me, the [most]	important meaningful significant relevant useful	aspect(s) idea(s) experience(s) issue(s) element learning	was (were) happened when… resulted from… arose from…
Previously, At first, In the past,	I	thought (did not think) felt (did not feel) noticed (did not notice) questioned (did not question)	
This	might be is perhaps could be is probably	because of… due to… explained by… related to…	
Having	analysed… applied… noticed… felt… discovered… observed… reflected… discussed… experienced… learned… read…	I now	feel… know… question… understand… realise… think… wonder…
I now	realise… think… understand…		
As a result, I have	developed adapted changed learned realised improved	my skills in… my understanding of… my knowledge of… my ability to…	
This knowledge This understanding This skill	is could be will be	essential important useful	to me in the workplace because… to me as a practitioner [because…]
As a next step Next	I will now need to… I aim to… I want to… I need to..	develop.. learn… improve… adapt… change	

*Adapted from Hampton, M. (2010). Reflective writing: a basic introduction: http://www.port.ac.uk/media/contacts-and-departments/student-support-services/ask/downloads/Reflective-writing---a-basic-introduction.pdf