
REFLECTIVE WRITING

SLS WEBINAR PROGRAM

Student Learning Support

WEBINAR RECORDING

- This is a recording of the material we cover in the live webinar of this topic.
- You may want to just watch the video straight through or use the pause button to stop and do the activities.
- The webinar slides are available at this link.
- <https://sls.navitas-professional.edu.au/webinar-recordings-materials/all>



WEBINAR GOALS

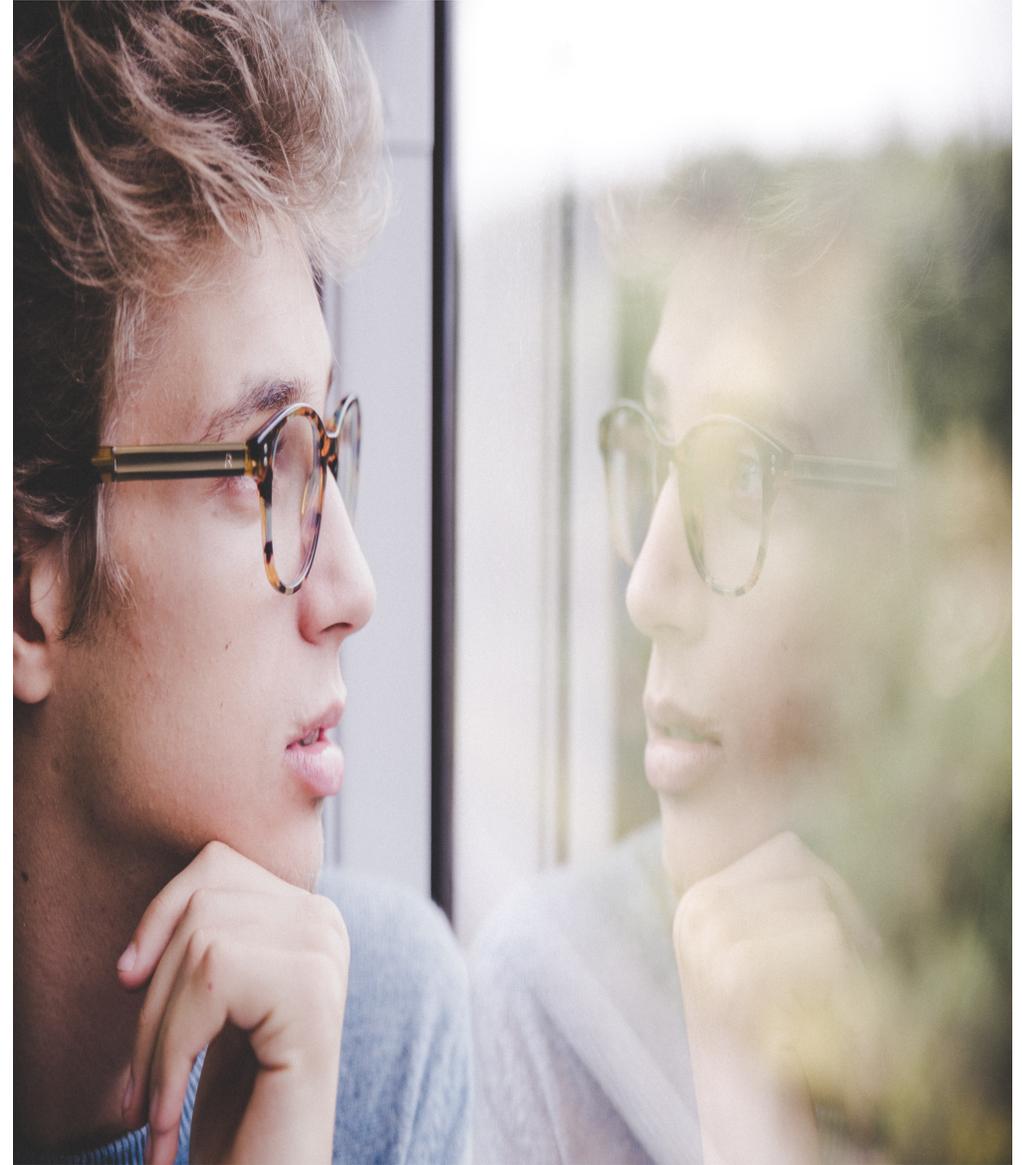
During this webinar you will learn...

- how to engage in critical reflection.
- how to connect theory and personal reflection.
- how to construct a reflective paragraph.

BEING CRITICAL

To have a critical perspective...

1. is to be able to compare and discuss different attitudes towards and interpretations of a subject.
2. is to understand the background of those attitudes and interpretations: the attitudes behind this attitude; the ideas behind this idea.
3. requires you do a fair amount of reading on the subject.
4. requires you to show awareness of the different points of view that could be taken on the subject you are writing about.

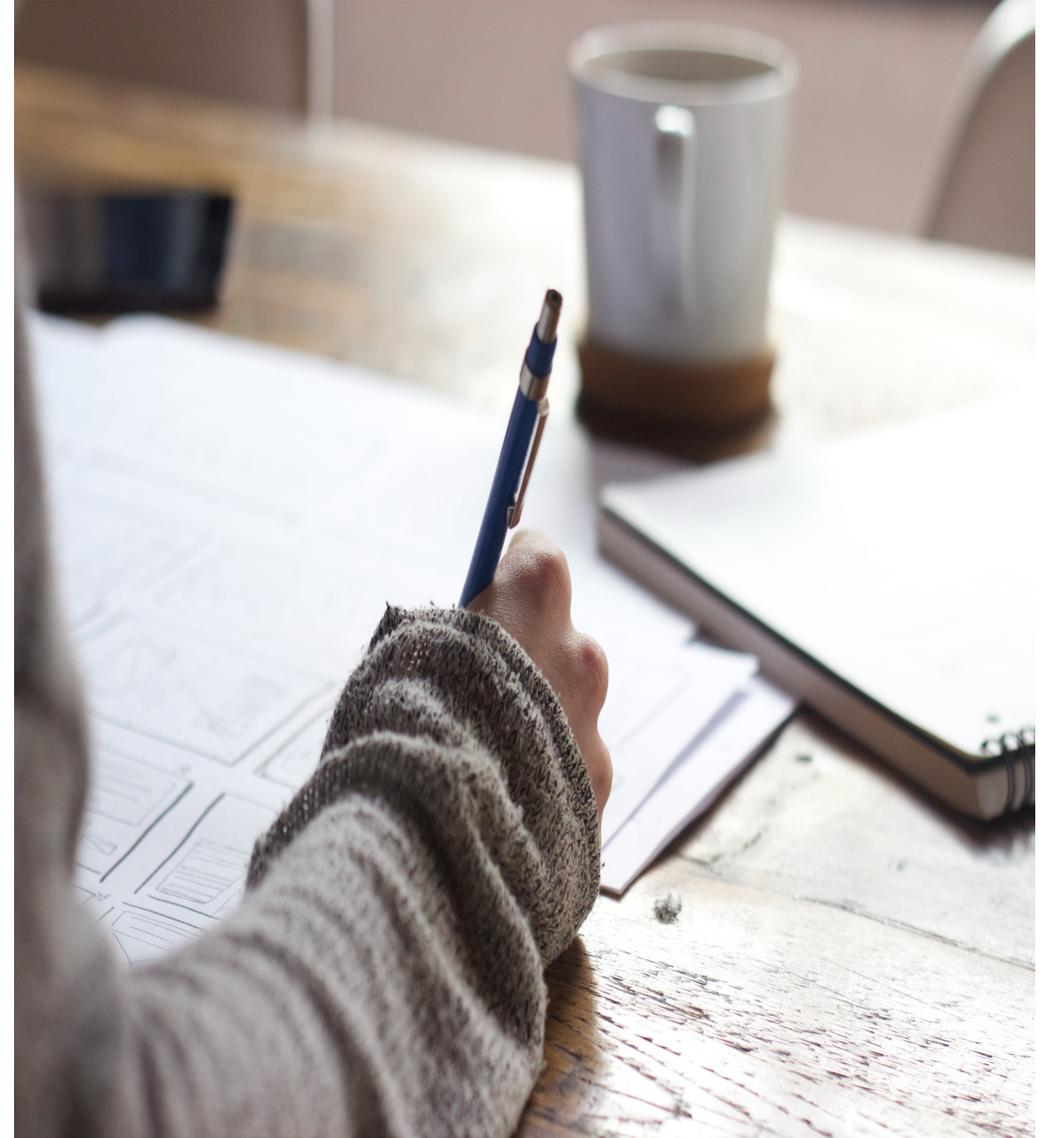


Assessment task words = analyse, compare, contrast, critique, discuss, describe, evaluate and examine

CRITICAL REFLECTION

Critical reflection is a process of connecting course concepts and theories with personal experience.

- *Consider WHAT and HOW you've learned.*
- *Consider the application of that learning.*





REFLECTIVE ASSESSMENTS AT ACAP

Assessments types that require you to critically reflect:

Reflective Blog
Discussion Forum
Post

Reflective
Statement
Reflective Essay

Learning Journal
Reflection on
research
participation

WHAT CAN WE REFLECT ON?

- Work experience
- Theory and class content
- Concepts and ideas
- The Media
- Research methods – the way studies are conducted
- Ethical codes of practice



DEVELOPING YOUR REFLECTIVE INSIGHTS

You need to be prepared to:

1. stand back from the events and try to be objective.
2. be critical of your own actions.
3. think of alternative explanations of events.
4. make use of evidence from a range of sources e.g. theories.
5. recognise that your own point of view will change with time.
6. discuss with others to deepen your insight and explore a range of perspectives.



REFLECTIVE THINKING



(Williams, Woolliams, & Spiro, 2012)

THINKING REFLECTIVELY...

In the quest to uphold social justice and foster ethical practice, Sicora (2017) highlights the need to reflect on mistakes to reduce the likelihood of repeating the error again.



1. What have you learned about yourself as a result of that experience?
2. Have you developed because of it? How?
3. Did it have any positive or negative bearing on your life?
4. Looking back, what would you have done differently?
5. Why do you think you made the particular choices that you did? Do you think these were the right choices?
6. What are your thoughts on the experience in general?
7. Was it a useful learning experience? What specific skills or perspectives did you acquire as a result?

CONNECT EXPERIENCE TO THEORY

Skovholt and Trotter-Mathison (2016) highlight the benefits of laughter, playful activities and joke telling as useful coping strategies for professionals whose work services people with serious human problems.

Consider the following:

1. How does my experience compare to what I have read?
2. Are there any theories that would help explain what happened to me?
3. What might be the results of doing things differently now I know this theory?
4. What evidence is there to show things might change if done differently?
5. How has the experience and this new knowledge changed my understanding?

Top tip: Keep comparing theory to practice and exploring the relationship between the two.

Ref: Skovholt, T. M., & Trotter-Mathison, M. (2016). *The resilient practitioner : Burnout and compassion fatigue prevention and self-care strategies for the helping professions*. Taylor & Francis Group.



HOW IS A REFLECTIVE ESSAY DIFFERENT TO AN ACADEMIC ESSAY?

Traditional Academic Essay

- Theory
- Present and past tense and future
- A thesis (line of argument) and a well organised structure
- Formal language
- Third person

Reflective Essay - Academic

- Theory and personal experience
- Past, present and future tense
- A thesis (line of argument) and a well organised structure
- Formal language
- First person and third person

Tran (2012) **claims** that students are not impacted by

During my internship, I **analysed** the different learning styles in the classroom.

LANGUAGE TO AVOID

AVOID OVERLY EMOTIVE OR SUBJECTIVE LANGUAGE

Informal	Formal
The client was very unhappy at the start of the session.	The client was visibly distressed.
The teacher said that the class were really naughty.	The teacher reported that the students did not behave well in the class.
I remember feeling really worried when I started telling them stuff about what I did in the past.	I remember feeling very apprehensive when I began to disclose personal information about my past.
The supervisor said that the clothes I was wearing weren't a very good choice.	The supervisor said that my clothing choice was inappropriate.

HOW CAN I STRUCTURE A REFLECTIVE PARAGRAPH?

1. **Topic sentence:** Introduce the main theory, skill or idea from the literature. This is also the main topic of your paragraph.
2. **Explanation:** You may need to give further explanation about this theory, skill or idea and you can include an in-text reference.
3. **Evidence/example:** Provide an example. This could be an example from **your practice or experiences**, depending on your assignment topic.
4. **Linking sentence:** Conclude the paragraph by summarizing the main idea and linking it to the main idea of the next paragraph.

Note: You may need more than one sentence for some of these parts. Also remember one main idea per paragraph.

EXAMPLE

Transparency is crucial to completing positive work with people in social work. Congruence is an imperative aspect of this where the worker and the service user have openness within themselves and with one another to foster trustworthiness (Platt, 2007). Though this can only happen if there is a genuine desire to be honest with one another. The professional should not hold up a façade and must attend to what the client is saying by staying in the present and remaining transparent. This may have seemed like a natural concept but was quite difficult to apply when working with Client A. I did not want to undermine her experience of being bullied by her peers by bringing my own personal experiences into the forefront. Yet, I thought if I told her she may not feel quite so isolated, which is a common feeling in teenagers with complex lives (Metzing-Blau & Schnepp, 2008). Ultimately, I realised my confidence had been shattered to the point where I began to question almost every piece of work I undertook with Client A, convinced that I would disappoint her and her mother. Seeking advice on being congruent with clients and starting daily reflective practice are steps I will now take to improve my practice.

1. Topic sentence

Transparency is crucial to completing positive work with people in social work. Congruence is an imperative aspect of this where the practitioner and the client have openness within themselves and with one another to foster trustworthiness (Platt, 2007). Though this can only happen if there is a genuine desire to be honest with

2. Connect to theory

3. Critical analysis

My professional should not hold up a façade and must attend to what the client is saying by staying in the present and remaining transparent.

4. Connect to experience

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5. Link to next idea

REFERENCING THEORY IN A REFLECTIVE ASSESSMENT

Incorrect	Correct
<p>The client moved into the acceptance stage (Axelrod, 2016).</p> <p>Problem = Axelrod did not comment on the client.</p>	<p>Axelrod (2016) states the acceptance stage of the grief cycle is typified by.....</p>
<p>Reframing the situation might have helped my client (Boyes, 2013).</p> <p>Problem = Boyes did not comment on the client.</p>	<p>Boyes (2013) suggests that reframing situations may be helpful.</p>
<p>In my childhood I had unhelpful behaviours (Boden et al., 2012)</p> <p>Problem = Boden did not observe your childhood</p>	<p>An example of a faulty assumption or belief is maladaptive thinking resulting in unhelpful behaviours (Boden et al., 2012).</p>

Working in my group proved that face to face communication is the key to better team performance. I used to think that the success of a team lay in everyone having access to up to date information about the project. However, I have come to realise that face to face communication can be more effective because it is synchronous, and the participants are more engaged. Bodell and Levins (2012) found that a group of geographically dispersed therapists collaborating on a project online did not continue the rich and sociable communicative interaction that had been established initially face to face. Their interactions online became task oriented and information based. In the same way, I found that our best ideas and solutions grew out of the meetings. I have also realised that richer communication between team members can build rapport and enrich understanding of your team members. The regular meetings made me become more conscious of my teammates' personalities, skills, strengths and needs. For example, Sharifa was able to teach Reyan how to use some software that she needed. Cascio (as cited in Ebrahim et al., 2012) cites "(the) loss of face to face synergies" as one of the five key challenges to virtual teams' success (p. 2660). The synergies of our skills became obvious in the face-to-face context and the confidence we had in each other increased. Meetings also built a sense of commitment to each other. We did not want to disappoint our team by missing timelines or making poor quality submissions. Consequently, I now think that a team can be more than the sum of its component parts. For any future teamwork, I am much more aware of the importance of the group meeting together. In a professional setting, I now consider that some incentive (e.g. free lunch or transport) to get a group together, if necessary, would be a sound investment. In future, I will always try to join teams who can get together because I now realise how crucial this is to success.

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Topic sentence - what is the main point of the paragraph?

interactions online became task oriented and information based. In the same way, I found that our best ideas and solutions grew out of the meetings. I have also realised that richer communication between team members can build rapport and enrich understanding of your team members. The regular meetings made me become more conscious of my teammates'

Use a study as evidence to support the idea

personalities, skills, strengths and needs. For example, Sharifa was able to teach Reyan how to use some software that she needed. Cascio (as cited in Ebrahim et al., 2012) cites "(the) loss of face to face synergies" as one of the five key challenges to virtual teams' success (p. 2660). The synergies of our skills became obvious in the face-to-face context and the confidence we had in each other increased. Meetings also built a sense of commitment to each other. We did not want to disappoint our team

Connect the evidence to your experience

by missing timelines or making poor quality submissions. Consequently, I now think that a team can be more than the sum of its component parts. I am more aware of the importance of groups meeting together in person. In a professional setting, I now consider that some incentive (e.g. free lunch or transport) to get a group together, if necessary, would be a sound investment.

In future, I will always try to join teams who can get together as I realise how crucial this is to success together with having clear agenda items for discussion for each meeting.

Tie in more theory and elaborate by connecting to your experience

State what you have learned and how you will apply in future situations. Link to next body paragraph main point

During my interviews with elite groups, they were often bemused and yet intrigued at the same time about my role as a foreign female researcher. Kobayashi (1994) highlighted how gender identities play out during fieldwork, meaning women are often discriminated against on the basis of their sex. I did not experience discrimination, but I feel my being a woman helped me gain access to certain respondents that I never anticipated to access, because I was somewhat perceived as a damsel in distress who needed help. While the pity I received worked in my favour, it had no bearing within the interviews themselves as I was not able to acquire the data that I hoped to. Having a better understanding of the cultural nuances would have helped me to manage my expectations better. Indeed, researchers such as Denzin and Lincoln (2011) have highlighted how a researcher's ability to gain access is shaped by personal characteristics, including gender. Looking back, I believe my fieldwork project was fairly successful, mostly because of its ability to gain nuanced insight from the second sample involving slum dwellers. The major pitfalls of the project mostly pertained to the logistics of the project, specifically the lack of training for the research assistant, and the general lack of a research focus.

EXPERIENCE AND THEORY TEMPLATE

This study strategy helps you to link research with your experience

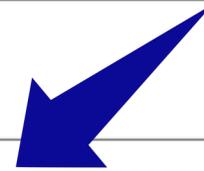
Notes about your experience	Information from literature that supports the concept
Working 15 hour shifts	Gasbi, P., Cervai, S., Rozbowsky, P., Semeraro, A., & Gregori, D. (2002). Burnout syndrome in the helping professions. <i>Psychological Reports</i> , 90(1), 309–314. https://doi.org/10.2466/pr0.2002.90.1.309
10 appointments a day	
Poor client records	

What are some vocabulary and sentence structures I can use?

For me, the [most]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> important meaningful significant relevant useful 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> aspect(s) idea(s) experience(s) issue(s) element learning 	<p>was (were)</p> <p>REPORT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> happened when... resulted from... arose from...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Previously, At first, In the past, 	I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> thought (did not think) felt (did not feel) noticed (did not notice) questioned (did not question) 	<p>RELATE</p>
This	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> might be is perhaps could be is probably 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> because of... due to... explained by... related to... 	
Having	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> analysed... applied... noticed... felt... discovered... observed... reflected... discussed... experienced... learned... read... 	I now	<p>REASON</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> feel... know... question... understand... realise... think... wonder...

RECONSTRUCT & REFRAME

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>

COMMON ERRORS

Be aware of falling into the trap of:

1. not having enough theory.
2. storytelling.
3. referencing reflection rather than the theory.

Don't forget to add in linking words to improve the flow of ideas.



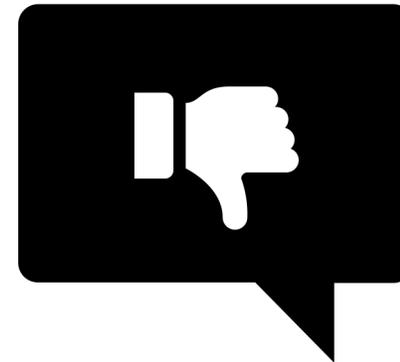
QUIZ TIME

Reflective essays should be objective and unemotional.

Agree ?



Disagree?



QUIZ TIME

You should only write about the positive aspects of your learning development.

Agree ?



Disagree?



CHECKLIST FOR REFLECTIVE WRITING

Have I:

- **Reported** (described) the issue or experience upon which I am reflecting?
- **Explained the relevance** of the issue or experience to my course?
- **Described my own response** to the experience?
- Reasoned about the significant factors in the situation (**using academic literature/theory**)?
- Outlined **how the issue or experience changed my understanding** and/or behaviour?
- Explained **how this new understanding will help to reconstruct my future professional practice**?
- **Followed the required structure** for this assignment?
- Checked that my **spelling and punctuation** are error free?
- **APA 7th** referencing style used correctly

FURTHER RESOURCES

For further information on critical writing and reflective writing visit:

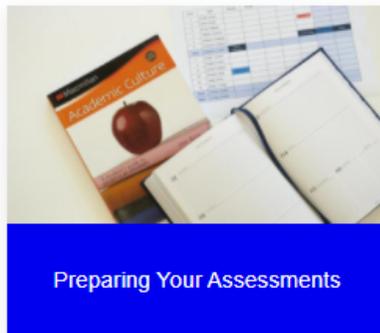
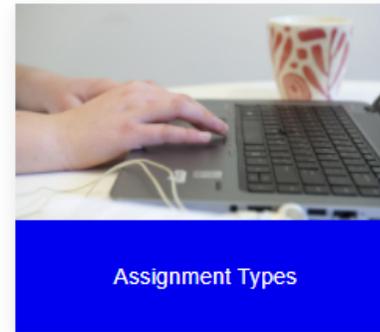
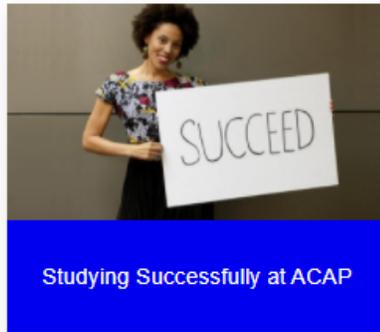
<https://sls.navitas-professional.edu.au/critical-thinking-1>

<https://sls.navitas-professional.edu.au/reflective-essay>

<https://sls.navitas-professional.edu.au/reading-and-note-taking>

<https://sls.navitas-professional.edu.au/note-taking-2>

STUDENT LEARNING SUPPORT WEBSITE



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WHO CAN HELP ME?

Questions about my assignment and class content	Questions and advice about how to develop study skills and improve my academic writing	Timetable, Attendance, Enrolment, Course Planning, Extension, Special Consideration, Accessibility, Counsellor	Class Space, Login, Email, Office 365	Fees
Your educator	Your local SLS advisor	The Student Engagement Team	IT support	Fees & Loans
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Q/A Discussion forum • Direct message • In the class space • Email educator 	Click here to find your local SLS contact details	Email: studentcentral@acap.edu.au Virtual Reception Desk: https://acap.zoom.us/j/660235497 Phone: 1800 061 199	Email: helpdesk@my.navitas-professional.edu.au Phone: (02) 9964 6322.	feesandloans@acap.edu.au

THANK YOU

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