



University of
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Academic Achievement Team

Reflective Writing

Academic Achievement Team
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Before we start

We do **record** our workshops.

Do not worry, only the **screen** will be recorded along with the **sound**.

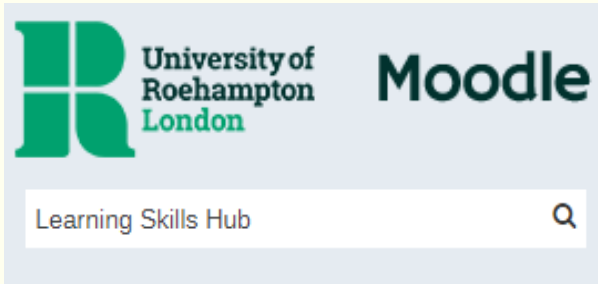
This means that if you ask a question, your voice will be recorded.

Do let us know if you would like this to be **edited out**.



The Academic Achievement Team

We're here to help ALL students to become confident, independent learners.



Our **Learning Skills Hub** page on Moodle has [online resources](#), details of our [workshops](#), [quick query drop in](#) sessions and lots more...

A banner for the Learning Skills Hub. It features a house icon, the text "Learning Skills Hub", and "Home of the Academic Achievement Team". Below this is a paragraph: "Need help with Learning and Library skills or Stats and SPSS? You've come to the right place. Explore below to find out more." At the bottom are three icons: a question mark in a speech bubble (labeled "Quick Queries"), a calendar (labeled "Workshops"), and an envelope with an @ symbol (labeled "Contact us").

 Learning Skills Hub

Home of the Academic Achievement Team

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A photograph of a desk with a book, glasses, and a smartphone. The book is open, and the glasses are resting on it. The smartphone is on the left side of the desk. The background is a green gradient.

Aims of the session

By the end of this session, you should be able to:

- Understand the **purpose** of reflective writing
- Understand the **steps** involved when writing reflectively

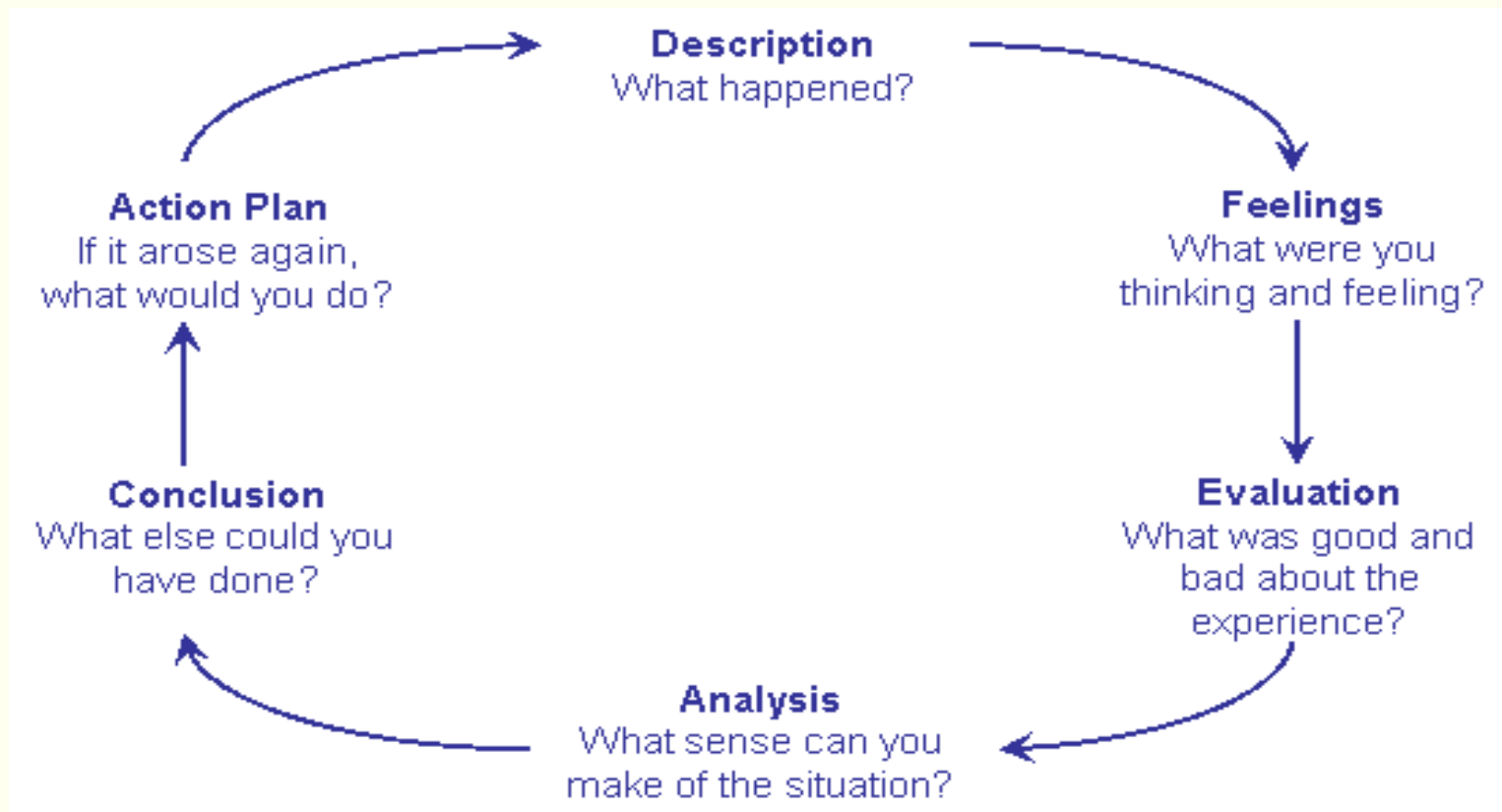


Why reflect?

‘It is not sufficient simply to have an experience in order to learn. Without reflecting upon this experience it may quickly be forgotten, or its learning potential lost. It is from the feelings and thoughts emerging from this reflection that generalisations or concepts can be generated. And it is generalisations that allow new situations to be tackled effectively.’ (Gibbs, 1988: 14)



Gibbs' reflective cycle





What is reflective writing?


Reflective writing is evidence of reflective *thinking*. It usually involves:

- **Looking back** at something (often an event, but also an idea or object)
- **Analysing** the event or idea (thinking in depth and from different perspectives, and trying to explain, often with reference to a model or theory)
- Thinking carefully about **what the event or idea means** for you and your ongoing progress as a learner and/or practising professional



Free or structured?

- Reflective **thinking** can be free, and still be very useful
- Reflective **writing**, too, can be unstructured- for example, in a personal diary
- In **assignments**, however, tutors normally expect to see **carefully-structured** writing!



A possible structure for reflective writing

- **Description** – What happened? What is being examined? *Keep this brief!*
- **Interpretation** – What is important about this experience? How can it be explained with theory? How is it similar to and different from others?
- **Outcome** – What have I learned? What might I have done differently? What does this mean for my future?



Activity

Read the hand-out (an example of basic reflective writing)

- Identify sections of the text according to **'description'**, **'interpretation'** and **'outcome'**

Example of basic reflective writing

Specific tasks were shared out amongst members of my team. Initially, however, the tasks were not seen as equally difficult by all team members. Cooperation between group members was at risk because of this perception of unfairness. Social interdependence theory recognises a type of group interaction called 'positive interdependence', meaning cooperation (Johnson & Johnson, 1993, cited by Maughan & Webb, 2001), and many studies have demonstrated that 'cooperative learning experiences encourage higher achievement' (Maughan & Webb, 2001). Ultimately, our group achieved a successful outcome, but to improve the process, we perhaps needed a leader to help encourage cooperation when tasks were being shared out. In future group work, on the course and at work, I would probably suggest this.

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Questions?

Thank you. Any questions?



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Or email: AATeam@Roehampton.ac.uk