

# Reflective Writing

There are different ways to structure **reflective writing**; refer to your unit outline to identify any faculty guidelines.

## What is the purpose of reflective writing?

Reflective assignments typically require you to document your own learning journey through a unit or topic. Reflective writing asks you to consider connections: between the theoretical aspects of your course and your own experiences in practical situations; between **what you already know or have experienced** and **what you are in the process of learning**.

## How do I start?

Reflection involves taking a pause to examine your own thoughts, beliefs, values, attitudes and assumptions, which form the foundation of your understanding.

Some guiding questions for reflective thinking include:

- What was my role in the event?
- Why did I adopt that role?
- How do I interpret what I experienced or observed
- What theories or ideas can I apply to it?
- What were my thoughts during that time? And why?
- How can I learn from this experience?
- What were my feelings?
- And why did I feel that way?
- What happened during that experience?
- And why did it happen?

## Different reflective writing approaches:

### The 4Rs Model of Reflective Thinking

#### 1. Reporting (and responding)

Report what happened or what the issue or incident involved. Why is it relevant? Respond to the incident or issue by making observations, expressing your opinion, or asking questions.

#### 2. Relating

Relate or make a connection between the issue and your own skills, professional experience, or discipline knowledge. Have I seen this before? Were the conditions the same or different? Do I have the skills and knowledge to deal with this? Explain.

#### 3. Reasoning

Highlight in detail significant factors underlying the incident or issue. Explain and show why they are important to an understanding of the incident or issue. Refer to relevant theory and literature to support your reasoning. Consider different perspectives. How would a knowledgeable person perceive / handle this? What are the ethics involved?

#### 4. Reconstructing

Reframe or reconstruct future practice or professional understanding. How would I deal with this next time? What might work and why? Are there different options? What might happen if...? Are my ideas supported by theory? Can I make changes to benefit others?

*Adapted from: <http://www.citewrite.qut.edu.au/write/4Rs-for-students-page1-v1.5.pdf>*

## Final points:

- The actual event or experience is not the main focus of reflective writing. What is more important is your reaction to it, and how it has shaped your thinking and learning.
- Your lecturer is likely to be looking for how well you can analyse and reflect on events in order to learn from them, and how well you are able to relate your study of theories to real life situations and practices.

## Useful links

### **Reflective Writing, University of Manchester:**

[http://www.humanities.manchester.ac.uk/studyskills/essentials/reflective\\_learning/reflective\\_writing.html](http://www.humanities.manchester.ac.uk/studyskills/essentials/reflective_learning/reflective_writing.html)

### **Reflective Writing, University of Reading:**

<https://www.reading.ac.uk/internal/studyadvice/StudyResources/Practicebasedlearning/sta-reflectivewriting.aspx>