

Reflective Writing

Assignments involving reflective writing, such as journals or reflection papers, are still considered to be academic writing, which means that most professors and instructors are looking for more than just your feelings on a particular subject. You can consider reflective writing to be a form of *informal* academic research. The goal of formal academic writing is often to remain objective and avoid any and all bias, but reflective academic writing might have a goal of confronting your personal biases head-on, acknowledge them, and examine what effect they are having on you and your practice.

There should always be at least two components to any reflective writing assignment: **analysis** and **personal reflection**. This document is short guide describing various components of reflective writing. Note that this style of writing is not a linear process; there is no defined order for the components, and a writer may consider incorporating components of analysis and personal reflection into each paragraph, depending on the assignment.

Analysis

Description

What is the topic? What is going on? Who was involved? When did the events occur? Is a physical description needed? What behaviours were observed? What do you know about the topic? How is the topic connected with the course outcomes?

Benefits

How does this subject contribute to society? To people's beliefs? To the future? To the present? What makes the topic so great? What are some strengths? Why is it important (to you)? Who might benefit from exploring this topic? What are some specific examples?

Limitations and logical inconsistencies

What could be improved about this topic? What are some weaknesses in the subject? Are there gaps in the arguments presented? How could this subject be harmful or detrimental to people, society, or other areas? What are some specific examples?

Applications

What is the real-world meaning for this topic? What are specific areas in which this knowledge or topic could be used? How is this subject useful? Why is it useful? What are some specific examples?

Personal Reflection

Initial reaction

What were your first thoughts when learning about this subject? What have you learned from this? What impressions do you have, positive or negative? Why do you think the subject was presented? What are you thinking and feeling about the topic?

What resonates with you?

How does this topic fit with your own beliefs and philosophies? Why does it fit? What do you like about the subject? What is important for you? What do you hope to take away or remember about this subject?

What does not resonate with you?

In what ways does this topic not fit with your beliefs and philosophies? What don't you like about the subject? Why not? What is causing you to feel negatively? What needs to be changed in order for you to enjoy this topic? Are your dislikes something with which everybody would agree?

Examples from own life

Where or when in your life do you see this subject? What are some specific examples of you experiencing the topic? Have you previously considered the link between the topic and your life? What are some specific examples of times that contradict the subject? If you have no examples of this topic in your life, why not?

Integration with own life

How might this affect your thoughts, feelings, and behaviours in the future? How could you improve your own life with the knowledge you have gained from this subject? What have you learned from this? How has this subject affected you? What are some specific examples of how you will integrate this topic into your life?

Questions

What questions do you still have about this subject? What would be important to know? How could you find the answers?