

Reflective Journal

Reflection, or the process of critically thinking about our behaviours, attitudes, beliefs and values, has been identified by numerous researchers as an important part of any learning process, be it formal or informal. The purpose of a reflective journal is that you should be the main one to benefit from it. Writing down your thoughts helps to clarify them in your own mind.

The reflective journal is:

- A “critical reflection of assumptions” – this is central to all adult learning processes that evaluate or challenge one’s underlying assumptions related to an experience
- A process of learning from experience that ensures progressive competency development over time. It should provide you with a means of engaging critically and analytically with module content, tease out assumptions, facilitate insight and stimulate self-discovery
- According to Goleman et al., self- directed learning which employs reflective questioning throughout its cycle and has been shown to be an effective strategy for developing emotional intelligence and ultimately leadership competency

Studies have shown that students engaging in reflective activities have reported increased self-awareness, self-confidence, and feeling of empowerment to recreate their own self-concept (Morrison, 1996). They have demonstrated enhanced professional skills such as more effective listening, a greater ability to manage change, and better ability to clarify arguments.

A reflective journal should be written in the first person and can include:

Example questions or prompts for your reflection:

What were the 3 main things that stood out for me from my reading, videos and the online discussions?

What beliefs or assumptions did I previously have that I now am challenging?

What was new or surprising for me?

What have I changed my mind about?

What did I observe when...?

What did I feel? What did I learn?

What will I do as a result of these new insights and awareness?

Identify an experience (*What happened? What struck me?*).

What does this mean? Why do I think this happened? (challenge your assumptions) How does this relate to the material I am studying? How does this connect to my understanding of this issue?

Apply the learning to personal or professional lives (So what have I learned from this? Now what will I do differently? What do I need to explore further? How will I think about this topic differently?)