

Reflective writing

using writing as a tool to think constructively and insightfully about events, experiences, and issues



Purpose

This strategy helps me sort out my thoughts and feelings and make decisions about what to do next.

For a sample use of the strategy, see the next page

APPLY the strategy

- Identify a purpose for reflecting (e.g., understand, clarify, decide).
- Record your basic observations about an event, idea or relationship.
- Revisit the events in your mind and add your insights and thoughts about what happened.
- Consider what this means for you and for your future actions.
- Review to check that your written reflections are constructive (help move you forward in your purpose), insightful (probe the issues) and realistic (grounded in reality).

Assessing my use of “writer’s voice”

Accomplished

Good

Basic

Needs improvement

Answering “What” — recording observations:

I can easily record clearly and with an appropriate level of detail many key observations about the event.

I can record many observations about the event, but they are not always clear and specific.

I can record a few key observations, but they are not always as clear and specific as they should be.

I struggle to identify key observations of an event and to record them clearly.

Answering “So What?” — extending your thinking:

I can think deeply and insightfully about the situation and am able to identify various possibilities that extend my thinking.

I can usually think deeply and insightfully about the situation and am able to identify some possibilities that might extend my thinking.

I can sometimes explore aspects of the situation, but I have difficulty moving beyond what is obvious to identify possibilities that extend my thinking.

I struggle to explore the situation and to identify any possibilities that extend my thinking.

Answering “Now What?” — Drawing out lessons:

I am clear about what I have learned and develop very constructive and reasonable options for moving forward.

I am usually clear about what I have learned and develop some constructive and reasonable options for moving forward.

I can sometimes identify what I have learned and develop some options for moving forward, but they are not always constructive and reasonable.

I struggle to think beyond what actually happened and to reach any clarity about what I have learned or what I might do to move forward.