

Reflective Writing

MA User Experience Design

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Academic Support





Aims for this session



- **To understand what is reflective writing?**
- **To discover useful tools and reflective models to writing reflectively for Your Macro UX and your Collaborative unit**
- **To review how to structure your reflective essays/report/diary/blog**

How do you feel about reflective writing?

**A.
Overwhelmed**



B. Not sure



**C. Chilled /Got
this!**

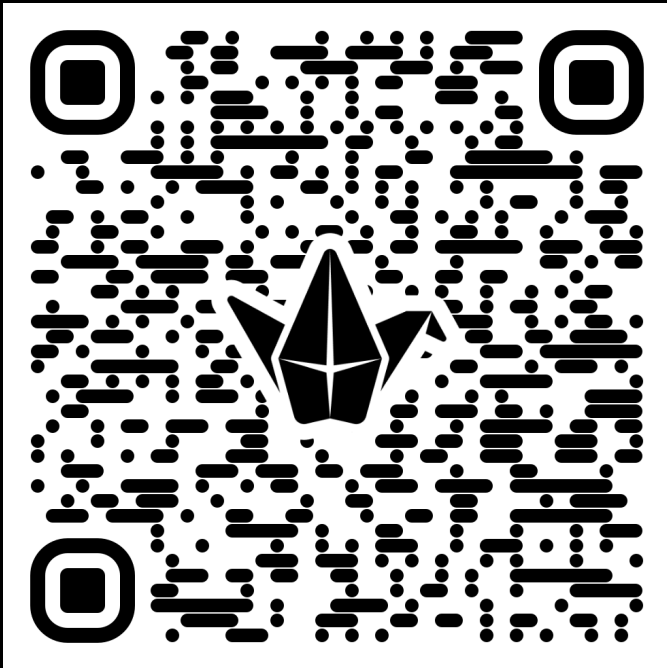


**D. This is
bigger than
me**





What is Reflective Writing?



What is Reflective Thinking?

- Reflective thinking is **part of your normal creative process**, you do it all the time when you review and analyse your work.
- Reflective writing **develops your reflective thinking** and helps you improve your work.
- Reflection enables you to **think critically** about your work.



Your MA User Experience Design Brief

Spring, Term 2

Macro UX (20 credits)

The Macro UX unit involves **working with an external partner on live briefs**. You can choose to work with industry or third sector organisations around a set of broad themes including; UX for smart city technologies, UX for cultural placemaking, UX for the future of publishing and UX for archives and collections.

Collaborative Unit (20 credits)

The Collaborative Unit is designed to **enable you to identify, form and develop collaborative working relationships with a range of potential partners**. These could be postgraduate student colleagues at the college or university level; postgraduate students at other Higher Education Institutions; external parties (e.g. companies, cultural organisations, community-based groups, NGOs, charities etc.)

Macro UX Brief

Assessment Description

1. A reflective project diary (blog) showing evidence of your research, outcomes and development process through the unit. This online diary should consist of weekly posts, up to 450 words in length each. Visual and moving image material should also be included.
2. A 750 - word essay of critical and contextual writing, engaging with the theoretical content of the unit, and relating it to your practical work.

Learning Outcomes

- LO1 Identify and pursue a personal UX design research interest, express it in various forms and communicate it to others. (Enquiry, Communication)
- LO2 Reflect in written and visual form how your work is positioned to the field of UX design practice. (Knowledge, Process)
- LO3 Demonstrate and define a critical understanding of the future of UX design and your own role within it. (Process, Realisation)
- LO4 Demonstrate how you would effectively collaborate within various levels of an organisation (Process)

Collaborative Unit

Assessment Description

The assessment for this unit is through a portfolio of work that will include research, project work, critical analysis and an individual critical self-reflection on the nature of collaborative working and learning.

Learning Outcomes

LO1 Demonstrate initiative and personal responsibility in researching collaborative opportunities and developing them at a professional level through networking, negotiation, research and planning skills in the context of user experience design (Process).

LO2 Critically engage in an agreed collaborative learning project that cuts across disciplines that will demonstrate advanced research, application of theoretical approaches to your proposed issues and contexts, and a comprehensive analysis of what you wish to do and why (Enquiry, Knowledge).

LO3 Demonstrate both independent and collaborative working required for personal and professional development through planning, negotiation, project management, and delivery (Process)

LO4 Demonstrate the learning gained from multi-disciplinary collaboration through a high-level critical self-reflection that contributes to personal and professional development. This should be done on a project blog (Process, Realisation).

Reflective writing:

- **looks back** at past experience to perform better in the future
- analyses, explores and explains **what happened and why**
- usually incorporates **models or theory**
- uses **academic language**

Reflective writing

Integrates theory and practice

Identifies the learning outcomes of your experience



Reflection can help with

- Understanding your **strengths and weaknesses**
- Identifying and questioning your underlying **values and beliefs**
- Acknowledging and challenging possible **assumptions** on which you base your ideas, feelings and actions
- Recognising areas of potential **bias or discrimination**
- Acknowledging your **fears**
- Identifying possible **inadequacies or areas for improvement**

Reflection

- Reflection is an **exploration** and an explanation of events (not just a description)
- It is important to select just the **most significant** parts of the event or process. Do not try to narrate the 'whole story'.
- It is important to '**reflect forward**' to the future as well as '**reflecting back**'.

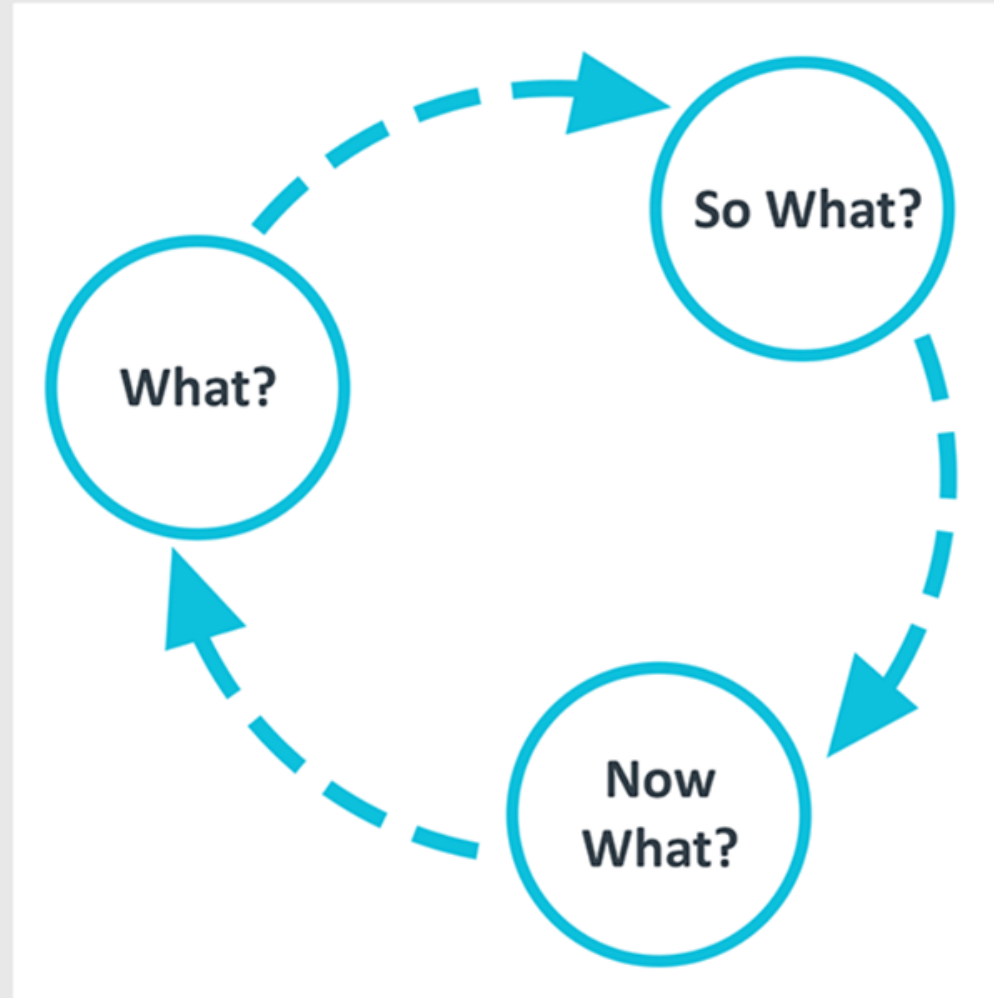
Reflective Models



WHAT? SO WHAT? NOW WHAT?

Simple framework of reflection.

Using these three stages of reflection you will be able to think about your experience, its implications and what this means for the future



- **'What?'** helps you **describe** the situation you want to learn from. You should identify the facts and feelings of the situation.
- **'So What?'** allows you to **extract the meaning** of 'What?'. Moreover, you should question what knowledge you and others had in the situation, and what knowledge or theories that could help you make sense of the situation.
- **'Now what?'** allows you to **create an action plan** for the future based on the previous questions.

Helpful questions to answer could be:



What ...

- ... is the context?
- ... is the problem/situation/difficulty/reason for being stuck/reason for success?
- ... was I/we/others trying to achieve?
- ... was the outcome of the situation?
- ... was my role in the situation?
- ... was the role of other people in the situation (if others were involved)?
- ... feelings did the situation evoke in me? And in others (to the extent you know)?
- ... were the consequences for me? And for others?
- ... was good/bad about the experience?

Helpful questions could be:

So what...



- ... does this tell me/teach me/imply about the situation/my attitude/my practice/the problem?
- ... was going through my mind in the situation?
- ... did I base my decisions/actions on?
- ... other information/theories/models/literature can I use to help understand the situation?
- ... could I have done differently to get a more desirable outcome?
- ... is my new understanding of the situation?
- ... does this experience tell me about the way I work?

Helpful questions could be:

Now what...



- ... do I need to do in the future to do better/fix a similar situation/stop being stuck?
- ... might be the consequences of this new action?
- ... considerations do I need about me/others/the situation to make sure this plan is successful?
- ... do I need to do to ensure that I will follow my plan?

Objects of reflection exercise

If you could work in a group of 4/5 and look at the reflective objects given.
Discuss and reflect using the what? So what? Now what? framework.

You will have 10 mins then you will feedback.

- Describe the object - facts and feelings. **What** can you see?
- **So What?** What knowledge do you and others have of this object and experience? Any theories to support this?
- **Now what?** How can you use this in the future



This Gibbs Reflective model is a good way to work through your experience



(AD1 Holdings Ltd company, 2020)

Gibbs Reflective Cycle 1998



Description

Here you have a chance to describe the situation in detail.

Helpful questions:

- What happened?
- When and where did it happen?
- Who was present?
- What did you and the other people do?
- What was the outcome of the situation?
- Why were you there?
- What did you want to happen?

Feeling

Here you can explore any feelings or thoughts that you had during the experience and how they may have impacted the experience.

Helpful questions:

- What were you feeling during the situation?
- What were you feeling before and after the situation?
- What do you think other people were feeling about the situation?
- What do you think other people feel about the situation now?
- What were you thinking during the situation?
- What do you think about the situation now?

Evaluation

Here you have a chance to evaluate **what worked and what didn't work** in the situation. Try to be as **objective and honest** as possible. To get the most out of your reflection focus on both the **positive and the negative** aspects of the situation, even if it was primarily one or the other.

Helpful questions:

- What was good and bad about the experience?
- What went well?
- What didn't go so well?
- What did you and other people contribute to the situation (positively or negatively)?

Conclusion

This is where you **summarise your learning and highlight what changes** to your actions could improve the outcome in the future. It should be a natural response to the previous sections.

Helpful questions:

- What did I learn from this situation?
 - How could this have been a more positive situation for everyone involved?
 - What skills do I need to develop for me to handle a situation like this better?
- What else could I have done?

Action Plan

It can also be extremely helpful to think about how you will help yourself to act differently – such that you don't only **plan what you will do differently**, but also **how you will make sure it happens**.

Helpful questions:

- If I had to do the same thing again, what would I do differently?
- How will I develop the required skills I need?
- How can I make sure that I can act differently next time?



10 minute
break

Words relating to your course aims and learning outcomes, they are all related to reflection:-

- Critiquing
- Evaluation
- Analytical
- Creative problem solving

Activity: Observing yourself

- In pairs reflect on **one** achievement or **one** success that you have experienced on your course so far.
- Make some notes about it, including a description, interpretation, outcome.
- Tell your partner about it.
- Consider any issues with the reflection.



Reflective

- Reflection is an **exploration** and an explanation of events (not just a description)
- Genuinely reflective writing involves revealing **anxieties, errors and weaknesses**, as well as strengths and successes.
- It is important to select just the **most significant** parts of the event or process. Do not try to narrate the 'whole story'.
- It is important to '**reflect forward**' to the future as well as '**reflecting back**'.

STRUCTURING REFLECTIVE WRITING



(FreePick company, 2010)

(says, 2011)



- **What should I write about?**

- **Research** – who inspires and influences your work? and why?
 - **Idea development** – how are your ideas and concepts developing?
 - What **materials** and **processes** you are exploring?
 - **Feedback** from tutors and peers in group crits, presentations, tutorials and collaborative work .
-
- You should reflect on and write about all aspects of your work and study!

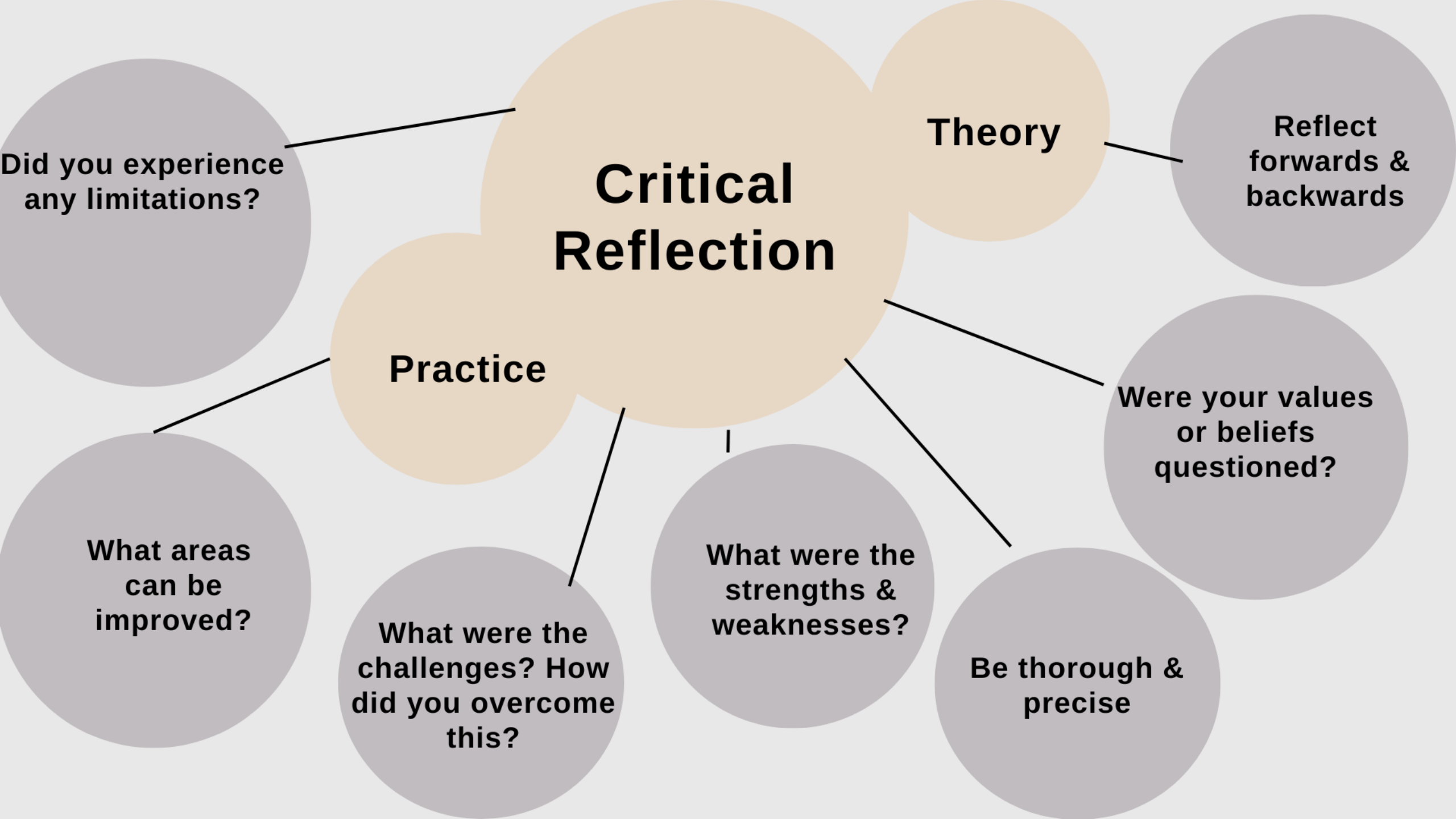
The three stages of reflective writing

- **Description** (keep it short).
- What happened? What was the situation?
- **Interpretation**
- What was most important/interesting/useful/revealing about the event or process? How can it be explained? (You might refer to Data/Media/theorists or any of the books on your reading list)
- **Outcome** - What have I learned from this? What does this mean for the future?

A possible structure for reflective writing.

Reflection usually has the following four major components:

1. **Introduction**: the event, incident or topic.
2. **Description and problematic aspects** of the event.
3. **Cause and effect** of the critical event. Do not write too much description at this stage.
4. **Explain and critique** what happened, what are you trying to resolve here, what you have learnt and how you would move forwards.



A photograph of a rustic wooden table with various items on it. In the upper left, there's a yellow mug filled with dark liquid. Next to it is a black smartphone. In the center, an open sketchbook with a red cover shows two pages with hand-drawn geometric patterns, including hexagons and a star-like shape. A closed black notebook with a hole punch is placed on top of the sketchbook. To the right of the notebook are two pens, one silver and one black. The background is a plain white wall.

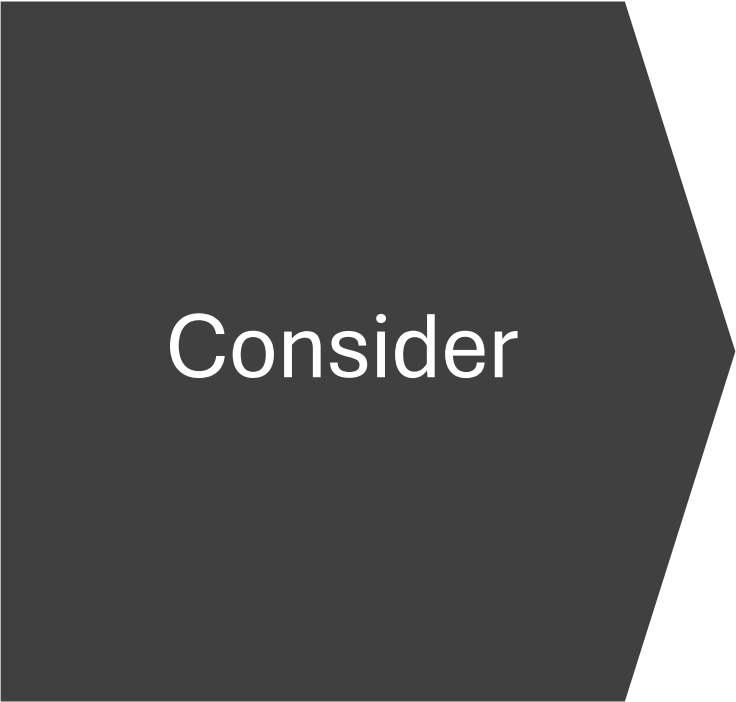
Any Challenges with Reflective Writing?

- Write on the Post it notes given and leave on your table.
- Then swop tables and the new group will offer some useful solutions, and we will share one idea from each table.



Review a good critical reflection example and highlight some key points that we have discussed so far that they have included.





Consider

The three stages of reflective writing

- **Description** (keep it short).
 - What happened? What was the situation?
- **Interpretation**
 - What was most important/interesting/useful/revealing about the event or process? How can it be explained? (You might refer to Data/Media/theorists or any of the books on your reading list)
- **Outcome:** What have I learned from this? What does this mean for the future?

An Example of Good Critical Reflection

1.

The study by Meier et al. (2016) taught me that obtaining knowledge of ECGs could be achieved in a variety of ways. As a result, I considered my own learning and talked to my mentor about ways of improving my own skills. I decided that to become comfortable with ECG readings I would look at as many as possible and was encouraged by my mentor to compare ECGs performed on the same patients over a period of time. Moreover, I found literature relating to the effectiveness of online learning (Pereira et al., 2017) and found a website that provided practice tests in ECG interpretation. This was very useful in allowing me to look at ECGs and gave me an opportunity to interpret them in my own time and find the correct answers without always needing assistance from my mentor or other ward staff. Through increasing my theoretical knowledge, I felt more confident in my own ability to interpret ECGs, which in turn enhanced my ability to safeguard patients.

An Example of Good Critical Reflection

1.

Outcome- what Have I learnt from this?

Description - What happened?

The study by Meier et al. (2016) taught me that obtaining knowledge of ECGs could be achieved in a variety of ways. As a result, I **considered my own learning** and talked to my mentor **about ways of improving my own skills**. I decided that **to become comfortable with ECG readings I would look at as**

many as possible and was encouraged by my mentor to compare ECGs performed on the same patients over a period of time. Moreover, I found literature relating to the effectiveness of online learning (Pereira et al., 2017) and found a website that provided practice tests in ECG interpretation.

Interpretation - What was the most important thing?

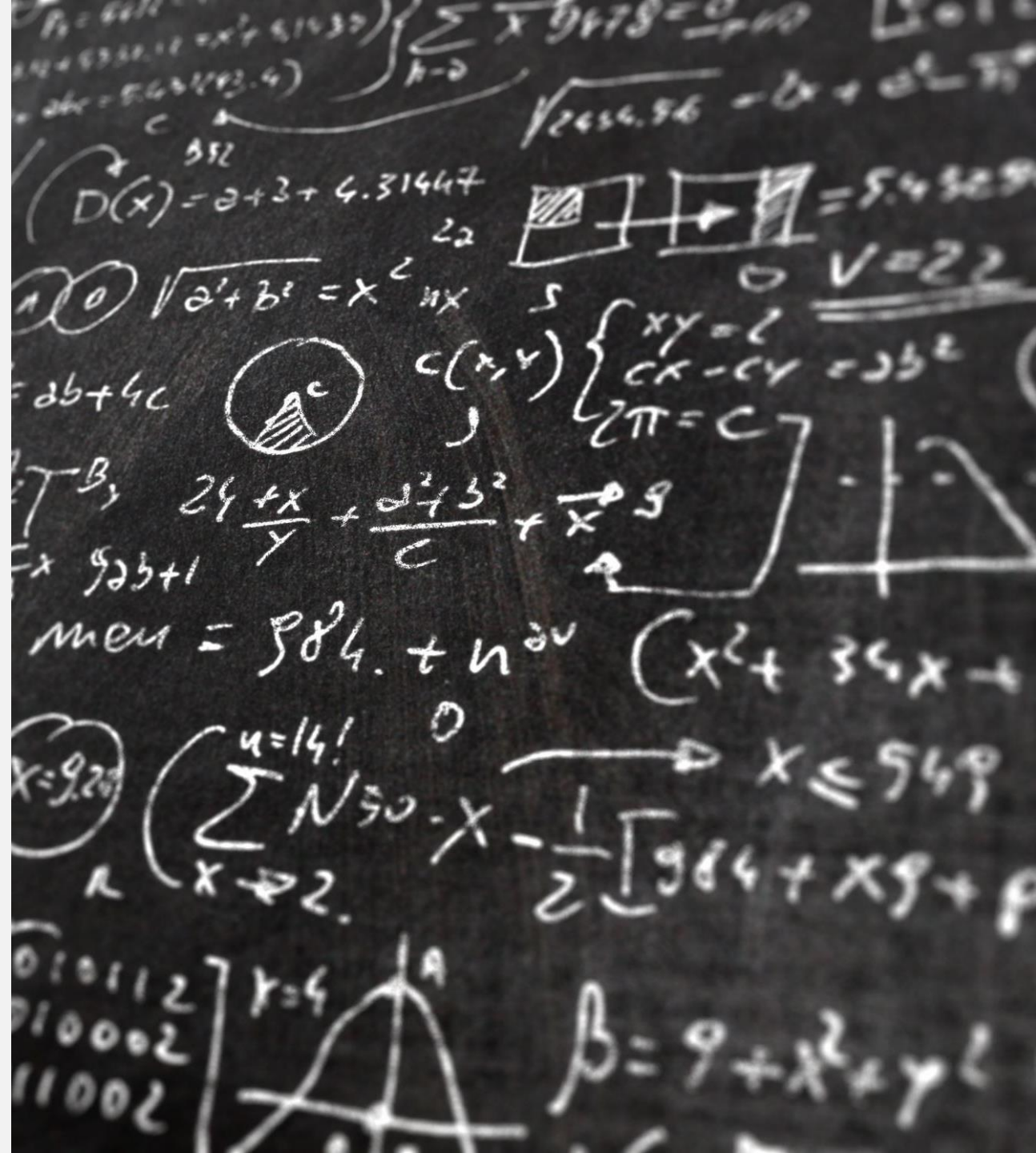
This was very useful in allowing me to look at ECGs and gave me an opportunity to interpret them in my own time and find the correct answers without always needing assistance from my mentor or other ward staff. Through increasing my theoretical knowledge, I felt more confident in my own ability to interpret ECGs, which in turn enhanced my ability to safeguard patients.

(Academic Skills Advice, 2022)

Outcome -what Have I learnt from this, what does this mean for the future?

Some common problems to avoid:

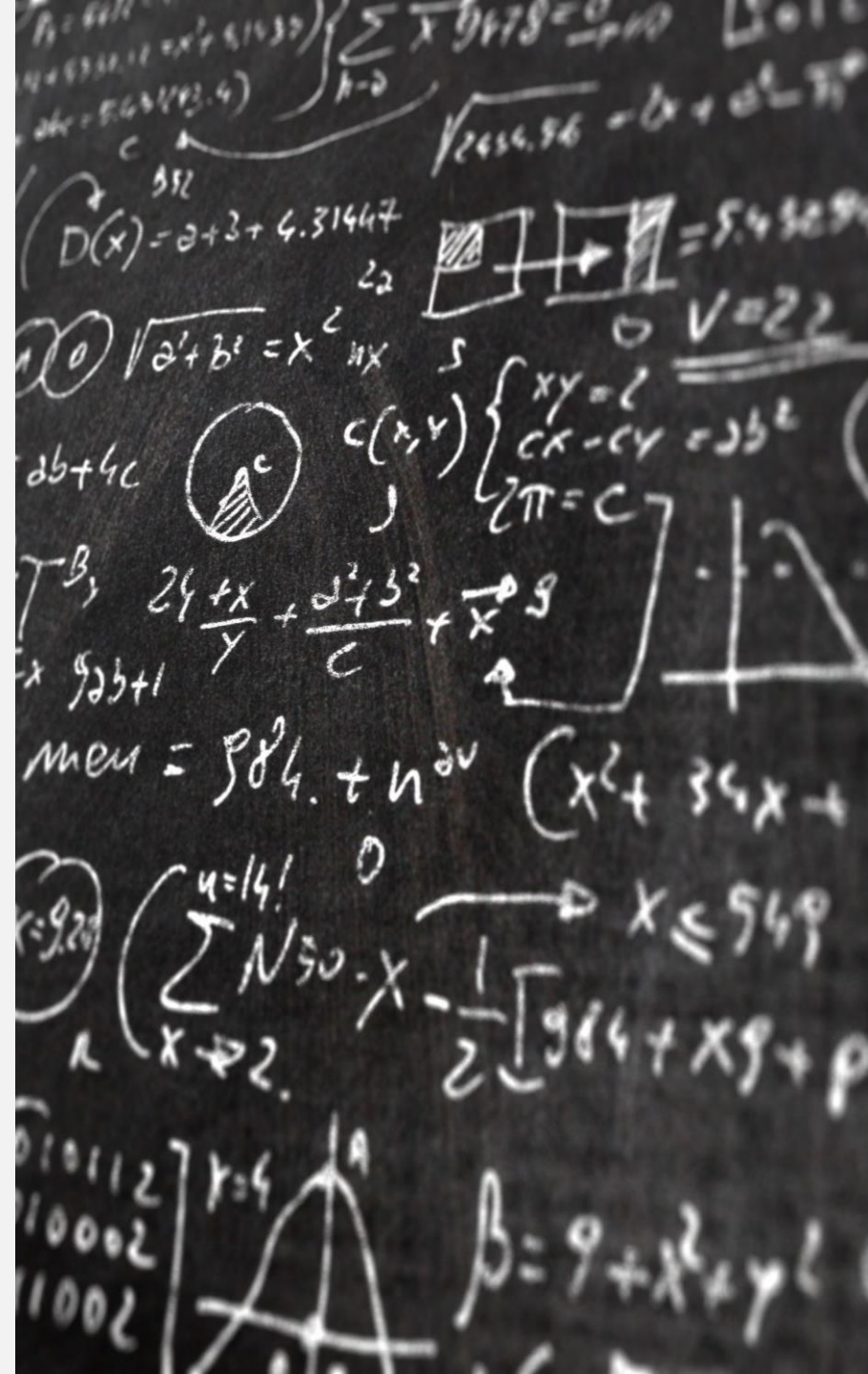
- Your writing is **too descriptive** (only telling us what you did), not giving much analysis or evaluation.
- You have **not written it throughout** your project and forgotten important information.
- It is too much of a **general overview** and does not highlight critical stages.
- There isn't a **balance** between positive and negative review.



What has this workshop reminded you of about reflective writing?

Important things to remember:

- Try and engage with reflective writing **as often as possible**. If you write a few sentences every day, critically reflecting on your creative developments, you'll be able to analyse your work in a relevant, proactive and developmental way.
- If you leave reflective writing until the end of a project you will find it difficult to reflect meaningfully and with purpose.
- **Writing and making are closely linked**; one informs the other. The more you critically reflect on your work the stronger your creative voice will be.
- Your reflective writing should be **useful to you** and help you to establish where your practice has been, where it is now and where it may go next.





“

**The way we experience
the world around us is a
direct reflection of the
world within us.**

~ Gabrielle Bernstein

Have you
registered?



Contact Academic Support

- Room: T122A (in the LCC library)
- Email: academicsupport@lcc.arts.ac.uk
- Academic Support Online (ASO):
<https://academicsupportonline.arts.ac.uk>
- Academic Support Online (ASO) LCC: <https://academicsupportonline.arts.ac.uk/directory/academic-support-london-college-communication>

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