

Faculty of Community Services

Academic Support & Resource Centre

An Introduction to Reflection Papers

A reflection paper is an opportunity for students to analyze an experience from their own perspective. Reflective papers allow students to identify beginning assumptions, thoughts, and beliefs related to the issue and express how their understanding has changed through the use of academic literature and critical analysis.

A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE

Step 1 - Make an “Experience-Response” Chart:

Key Experiences	Personal Responses
<p><i><u>Objective Recall</u></i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ What did you see, hear, taste, touch, and smell? (as appropriate, at least, include see and hear)✓ Who was involved?✓ What interactions did you observe?✓ Are there ethical, cultural, spiritual, developmental, social, or economic considerations to be taken into account?✓ Are there health/illness considerations to be taken into account?	<p><i><u>Subjective Recall</u></i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ What did you think?✓ What did you feel?✓ What were your intuitions?✓ How did you think others felt?✓ What are your values and/or beliefs in relation to this event?✓ From where do these values and beliefs arise and why?

(Adapted from Ryerson Collaborative Nursing LEARN guidelines, 2016.)

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Step 2 - *Summarize* the experience to be reflected upon using the “Experience-Response” chart.

Step 3 - *Identify* the matter or issue that is unusual or needs to be resolved.

Step 4 - *Consider* what you know from course material.

Step 5 - *Interpret* the event according to your literature review.

Step 6 - *Critically appraise* the literature and investigate how these findings relate to your identified key issue.

Step 7 - *How* has your thinking and/or how have your beliefs changed?

Step 8 - *Revise* based on your expanded understanding of the situation.

- ***What actions, thoughts, practice should be preserved? What should be changed?***

TIP & TRICKS!

Think of a reflection paper as “**past-present-future**”

- **Past:** reflecting on the experience, summarize what happened; how did you feel and why did you feel these feelings?
- **Present:** Use current literature to identify key issues within your experience or to support your experience.
- **Future:** How has this reflection and literature review changed how you feel going forward? How will your practice / attitude / thought process change for future experiences similar to the one discussed in your paper?