



ACE Workshop:

Reflective Writing 1 – Introduction to Reflective Models

Please note: these workshops are interactive!

Message the lecturer if you are unable to unmute your microphone during the session.

Session will start at: 12:00

Reflective Writing 1: Workshop Content

Explain the benefits of reflective writing in academic study

Categorise the different stages of two reflective models in terms of their academic purpose

Modify reflective sections to improve concision, specificity and criticality

By the end of the lesson you will be able to:

Use different models to write critically analytical reflective assignments.

Reflective Writing 1

Tasks

- 1) What is reflective writing?
- 2) What are the benefits of practicing reflection in your workplace / on your degree apprenticeship?

Answer

Reflection is “one of the ways that professionals learn from an experience in order to understand and develop their practice.”

(Jasper, 2013, p. 2)

“We do not learn from experience, we learn from reflecting on experience.”

(Dewey, 1933, p. 78)

Reflective Writing 1

Reflection enables you to:

Gain **clarity** and **better understand** your experiences.

Think about your **long-term professional or academic goals**.

Develop a **questioning, critical approach** to professional and academic practice.

Identify **strengths** and **weaknesses**.

Engage with challenging theories, models, and concepts.

Generate **original insights** and **inform future decision making**.

Interrogate your **assumptions, behaviours**, and **motives** in the workplace and beyond.

Explore alternative perspectives and **develop deeper self awareness**.

Reflective Writing 1

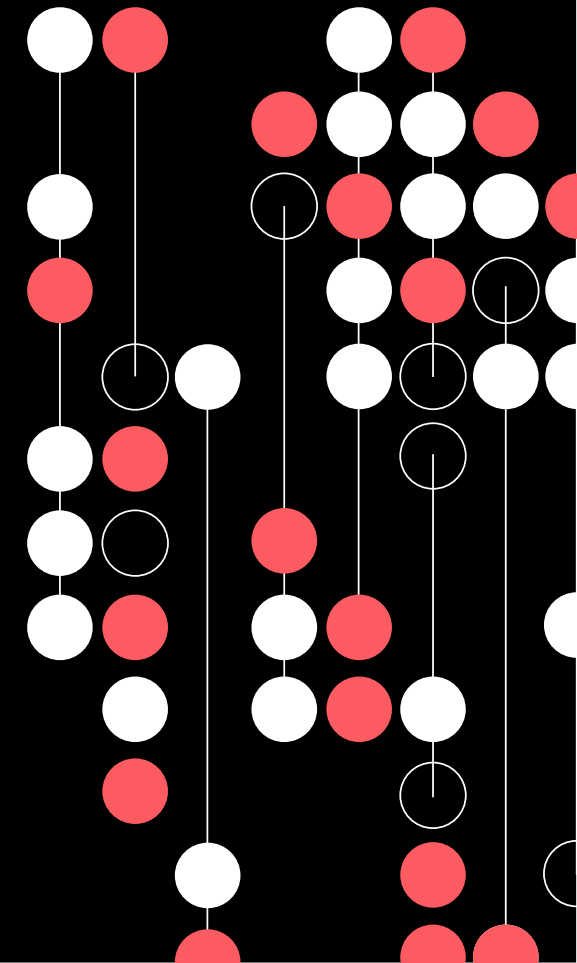
Why use a reflective model?

When tasked with a reflective assignment, it can be difficult to know what to do or where to begin!

Reflective models such as Gibbs or Driscoll may therefore be used as a **template for the process of reflection**.

This is because they assist in the systematic deconstruction of experiences, helping to ensure that **you ask meaningful questions at each stage**.

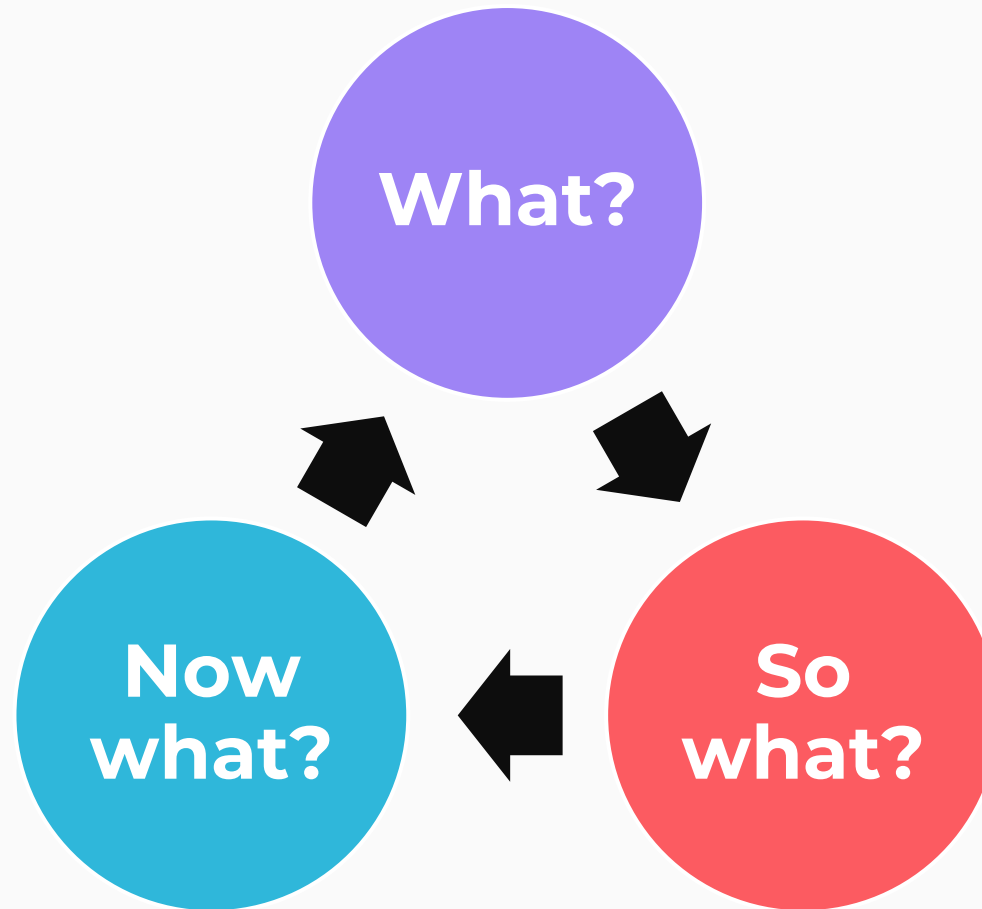
1. Driscoll's Reflective Model



Driscoll's Reflective Model

Task

Can you name the 3 stages of Driscoll's reflective model?





1. 'What?' Stage

Briefly describe the experience / situation / incident you will be reflecting on.

- What happened?
- What exactly did you do?
- What did other people do who were involved in this?

TIP!

Be concise! Only give essential background details that we need to know to understand your later analysis.

'What?' Stage - Describe the experience

Task

1) Is this excerpt a good example of a 'What' section?



Creating a dynamic and capable team is of crucial importance in the modern business environment. Many challenges can be experienced in trying to foster a cohesive and inclusive team atmosphere. At Company X, the needs of preserving the status quo were placed above innovative and novel approaches which might have benefitted the team in the long run. At Company Y, the management were reluctant to allow lower-level employees to suggest solutions to pressing issues. At Company Z, likewise, there is no forum for employees to share ideas which could improve team performance.

2) How could we improve this paragraph? Refer to the 'What?' stage outline on the previous slide.

1. 'What?' Stage

Improved Answer

Briefly describe one experience / situation / incident you will be reflecting on.

- | | |
|--|---|
| • What happened? | Having experienced issues with creating engaged and dynamic teams in both my current and previous roles, I decided to propose an initiative in July 2024. |
| • What exactly did <u>you</u> do? | I proposed to my manager to introduce a weekly employee forum whereby ideas could be shared, and best practice discussed across the business. |
| • What did other people do who were involved in this? | My manager accepted my proposal and colleagues were enthusiastic about participating. |



2. 'So What?' Stage

Critically analyse the significance of your experience.

- Why was this important?
- How do you feel about this?
- What did you learn about yourself from this?
- How can you use academic theory to make sense of this?

TIP!

You are expected to make use of academic evidence for the 'So what?' and 'Now what?' stages!

2. 'So What?' Stage - Critically analyse the experience

Task

1) Is this excerpt a good example of a 'So What' section?



Many authors have discussed the importance for team cohesion of employees feeling able to 'speak truth to power'. My weekly forum initiative let people do this and I felt good as a result. It is important for me to do things like this for the sake of my career.

2) How could we improve this paragraph? Refer to the 'So What?' stage outline on the previous slide.

2. 'So What?' Stage

Possible Answer

Critically analyse the significance of your experience.

- | | |
|--|--|
| • Why was this important? | Initiating and working on projects independently is crucial for my career development . This instance allowed me to make connections across my organisation, expanding my professional network ... |
| • How do you feel about this? | I felt proud and encouraged by the high level of participation from colleagues, invigorated by their constructive suggestions, and... |
| • What did you learn about yourself from this? | I discovered my ability to instigate change , work with others across various teams, and... |
| • How can you use academic theory to make sense of this? | Reference theories on team cohesiveness, diversity and inclusion, employee engagement and wellbeing, etc. |

3. 'Now What?' Stage - Relate experiences to future practice

Task

Consider what will follow in the 'Now what?' paragraph. What question prompts might we use?





3. 'Now What?' Stage

Explain how the experience will inform your future practice.

- How has this experience influenced your thinking or behaviour?
- What will you do in a similar situation in future?
- How could you achieve a better outcome next time?
- What could you do to better prepare yourself for this?

TIP!

You are expected to make use of academic evidence for the 'So what?' and 'Now what?' stages!

3. 'Now What?' Stage

Explain how the experience will inform your future practice.

• How has this experience influenced your thinking or behaviour?	This experience has reinforced my knowledge / confidence in...
• What will you do in a similar situation in future?	Having established connections across the organisation, I will...
• How could you achieve a better outcome next time?	Following the feedback I received from colleagues regarding the employee forum, I intend to...
• What could you do to better prepare yourself for this?	However, further research on team cohesiveness and inclusion / employee wellbeing is required to...

What?

Briefly describe the experience / situation / incident you will be reflecting on.

- What happened?
- What exactly did you do?
- What did other people do who were involved in this?



So
What?

Critically analyse the significance of your experience.

- Why was this important?
- How do you feel about this?
- What did you learn about yourself from this?
- How can you use academic theory to make sense of this?

Now
what?

Explain how the experience will inform your future practice.

- How has this experience influenced your thinking or behaviour?
- What will you do in a similar situation in future?
- How could you achieve a better outcome next time?
- What could you do to better prepare yourself for this?

Driscoll's Reflective Model

Advantages

Straightforward to use

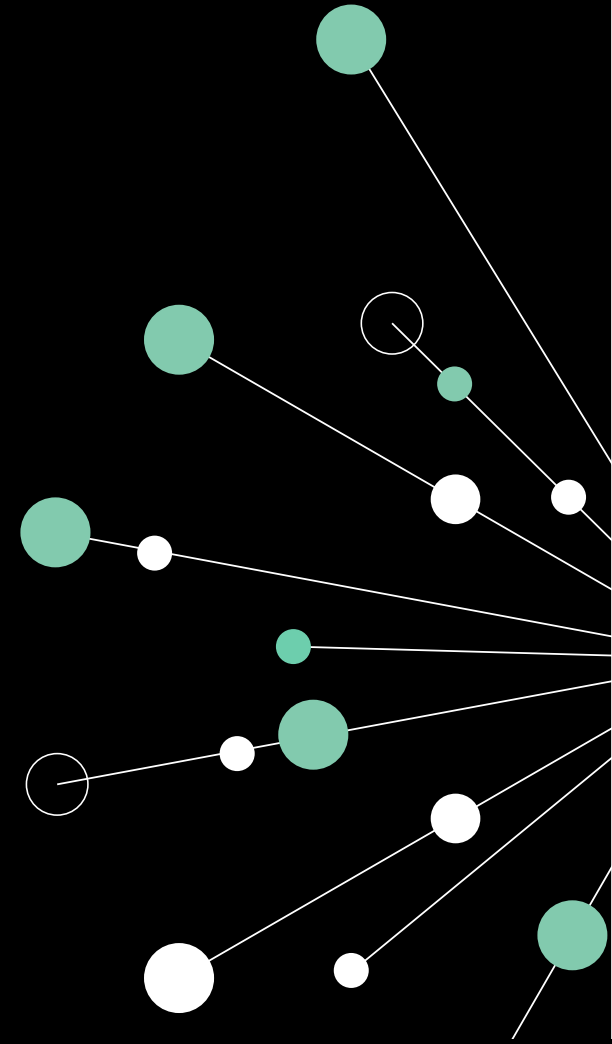
Stages are easily remembered, titled after a prompting question

Disadvantages

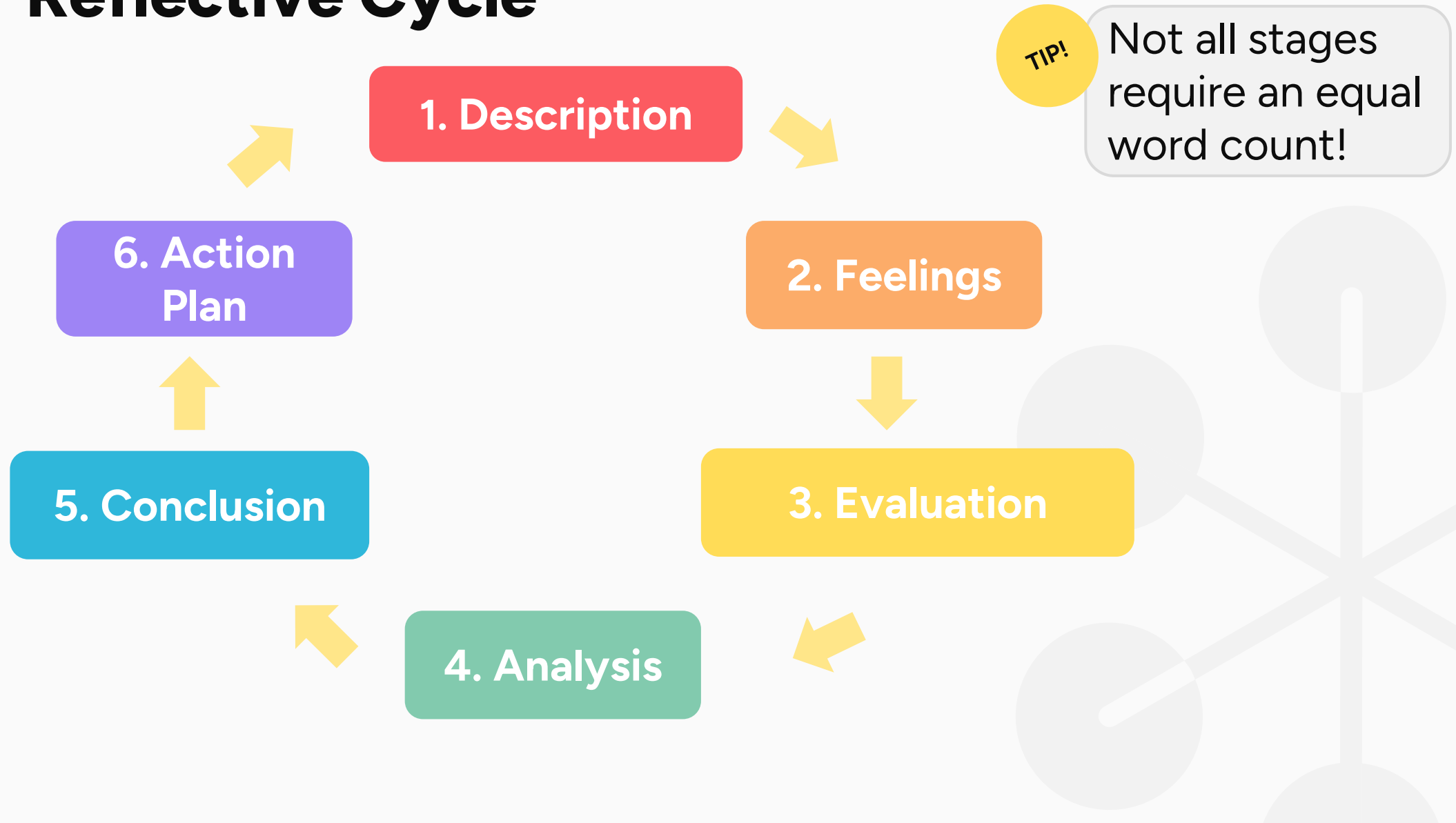
Simplicity of questions may encourage superficial rather than critical reflection

Models such as Gibbs' include additional stages

2. Gibbs' Reflective Cycle



Gibbs' Reflective Cycle



Gibbs' Reflective Cycle

1. Description

a

If it arose again, what would you do?

2. Feelings

b

What happened?

3. Evaluation

c

What sense can you make of the situation?

4. Analysis

d

What were you thinking and feeling?

5. Conclusion

e

What was good / bad about the experience?

6. Action plan

f

What else could you have done?

Gibbs' Reflective Cycle

1. Description

b

What happened?

2. Feelings

d

What were you thinking and feeling?

3. Evaluation

e

What was good / bad about the experience?

4. Analysis

c

What sense can you make of the situation?

5. Conclusion

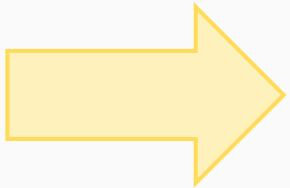
f

What else could you have done?

6. Action plan

a

If it arose again, what would you do?



Gibbs' Reflective Cycle: Analysis

Using **scholarly theories, models** and **concepts** to **make sense of experiences**:

Seath (2022) argues that it is crucial for leaders to always maintain flexibility, and so I should have adapted my management style proactively to suit the needs of different colleagues. It was difficult to motivate my team to participate enthusiastically in the project, perhaps because I have recently moved departments and I am viewed as less experienced (Soady, 2023). In overseeing an experienced team outside of my specialism, I likely overcompensated by utilising an authoritarian style which alienated colleagues who lacked faith in my leadership (Martin, 2022).

Gibbs' Reflective Cycle: Analysis

Possible Answer

How to improve use of **scholarly theories, models** and **concepts** to **make sense of experiences**:

- **Use additional sources or evidence to back up a claim**
'Calvin (2024) supports this view, as...' / 'This can also be seen in...'
- **Consider alternative perspectives / theories / experiences:**
'Wrigley (2024), however, challenges Seath (2022), arguing that...'
- **Discuss limitations, challenges, "to what extent" the model can be applied in the workplace context:**
'While Soady (2023) claims that the perception of inexperience always negatively impacts authority, the author neglects to consider the specific organisational culture of Company x, which...'

Assess the criticality of your work

Critical Thinking Checklist:

Have I **presented** an argument?

Have I **justified** my argument?

Have I **explained** its significance?

Is my argument **convincing**?

Have I **considered numerous perspectives**, developing a balanced argument?

Have I **engaged critically with scholarly resources**, evaluating the validity, coherence, and usefulness of their arguments?

Have I considered the **strengths and limitations** of their positions?

Gibbs' Reflective Cycle

Advantages

Prompts consideration of positive and negative aspects of the situation

Six clear stages including 'Feelings' – useful for experiences with a strong interpersonal dimension

Disadvantages

Less user-friendly than Driscoll's model

The (false) implication that all stages require equal treatment in writing

Choosing a reflective model

TIP!

- There are *many* different models to choose from.
- Although each model differs in approach, they include comparable stages. The **key differences** between each model are the **number** and **complexity of the stages** (Cambridge University, 2021).
- If your assignment brief does not stipulate which should be adopted, **clearly and succinctly explain your choice** of reflective model.

Reflecting Critically

TIP!

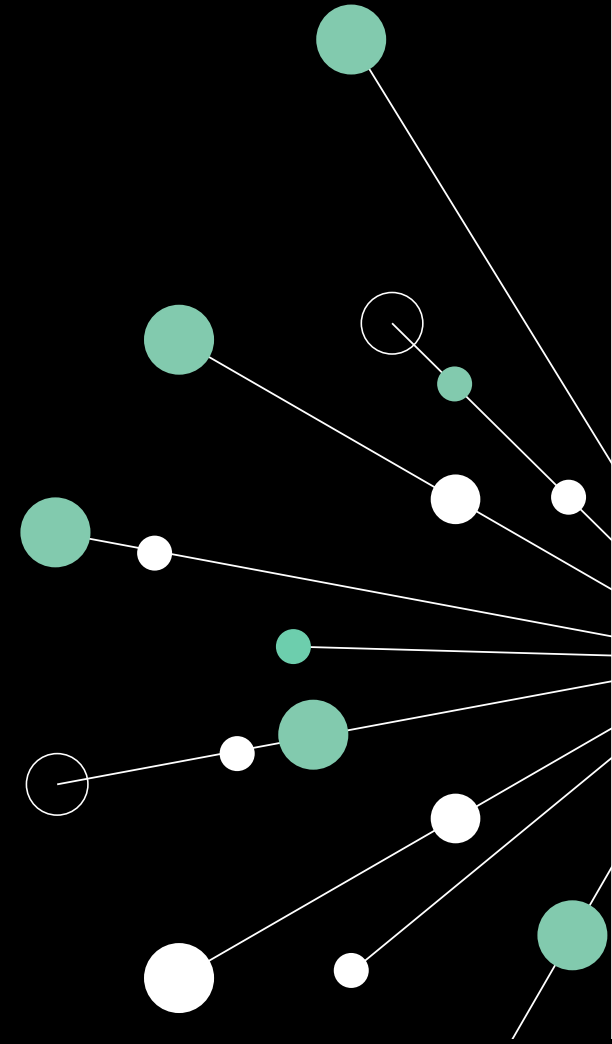
No matter which model you choose, you must **engage with relevant scholarly theories** to...

- Examine preconceptions
- Assess current organisational procedures
- Identify triggers and causes
- Solve logistical problems

The objective is not to provide a summary of your experiences in the workplace, but to **critically reflect** on them – **developing your professional skillset and proposing recommendations for improvement.**

(Adapted from University of Waterloo, 2023)

Review



Reflective Writing 1 - Review



'What?' is the first stage of Gibbs' reflective cycle

Reflective Writing 1 - Review



Reflective paragraphs should contain academic theory unless otherwise stated

Reflective Writing 1 - Review



You can pick and choose your favourite bits from different reflective models without justification

References and Further Reading

Driscoll, J. (2007) *Practising Clinical Supervision: A Reflective Approach*. London: Bailliere Tindall.

Gibbs, G. (1988) *Learning by Doing: A guide to teaching and learning methods*. Oxford: Oxford Polytechnic.

Jasper, M. (2003) *Beginning Reflective Practice*. Cheltenham: Nelson Thornes.

Porter, J. (2017) 'Why you should make time for self-reflection (Even if you hate doing it)'. *Harvard Business Review*. Available at: <https://hbr.org/2017/03/why-you-should-make-time-for-self-reflection-even-if-you-hate-doing-it> (Accessed: 12 June 2025).

University of Hull (2022) *Overview of reflective writing*. Available at: <https://libguides.hull.ac.uk/reflectivewriting/vsummary> (Accessed: 12 June 2025).

University of Waterloo (2023) *Critical Reflection*. Available at: <https://uwaterloo.ca/writing-and-communication-centre/critical-reflection> (Accessed: 12 June 2025).

ACE Feedback

Thank you for attending this ACE workshop.
We would be grateful if you could take 2 minutes to
complete our **feedback form**.

Do you require further academic support?

Look on the
ACE Page for
resources

Check out our
upcoming
workshops

Book a 1-2-1
tutorial



Any questions?