The Reflective Portfolio: a rough guide

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Overview

Why a ‘reflective’ assignment
Your questions
What we are looking for

Time to think about how you will approach it
Why a ‘reflective’ assignment?
CPD for a wizard?
Harry stared at the stone basin. The contents had returned to their original, silvery white state, swirling and rippling beneath his gaze.

“What is it?” Harry asked shakily.

“This? It is called a Pensieve,” said Dumbledore. “I sometimes find, and I am sure you know the feeling, that I simply have too many thoughts and memories crammed into my mind.”

“Err,” said Harry who couldn’t truthfully say that he had ever felt anything of the sort.

“At these times” said Dumbledore, indicating the stone basin, “I use the Penseive. One simply siphons the excess thoughts from one’s mind, pours them into a basin, and examines them at one’s leisure. It becomes easier to spot patterns and links, you understand, when they are in this form.”

J Rowling (2000)
Reflection promotes learning

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

John Dewey 1859 - 1952
Reflective writing

The **act of writing** itself will shape the content of your reflection
What questions do you have?

- In threes: **5 minutes**
  - Find out what questions you all have about the Reflective Portfolio Assignment.
  - I will pool all your questions and try to answer them by the end of the session.
So what are we really looking for?
Critical thinking

Show that you are thinking deeply and openly about **how** you teach and **why** you think you teach as you do

**Tip:** be curious, and honest, about your practice; go ‘assumption hunting’
We all make assumptions

How many legs does this elephant have?
Example

“I began to think about the amount of material that I covered in my tutorials and how I usually had to rush to get through everything. I knew that I had always felt the need to include a lot of detail in my sessions and I wondered why this might be the case. I realised that it might be because I wanted to ‘deliver a perfect product’ as much as I wanted to enhance my trainees’ learning. Underlying this was probably my assumption that trainees would want to take away a detailed set of notes, which is what I had wanted as a trainee...”
Perspective taking

Show how you are making efforts to stand back from your own position and guess about others’. What might your learners, your colleagues or the theory suggest may be going on?

**Tip:** use language that shows you are trying to imagine how thing might look from others’ perspectives, eg ‘wonder’; ‘guess’; ‘suppose’
No-one can see the whole elephant
Example

“"I wondered whether the students were actually learning what I hoped they would, and if they were even aware themselves of what they were learning. They had evaluated the session very highly, scoring it as ‘very enjoyable’ (see Appendix 1)). I was really pleased about this, however I wondered whether their enjoyment might actually be a product of my enthusiasm for the topic. What if they had really loved the session but not actually learned the key points?”
Integration

Show that you are combining all the elements of your learning: what you **know**, what you **do** and what you **value**

**Tip:** make links and cross-reference
The connections matter most
Example

“It is known that the right environment is of fundamental importance for effective learning, (Maslow, A. H. 1943). The physical environment of the doctors’ room is not ideal, and we have little control over this, so I decided to consider the ‘emotional’ environment of my tutorials. I thought back to my own time as a junior doctor on the ward and I remembered how anxious I had often been that I would answer a question wrongly. I began to wonder if there were things I could do to reassure the trainees ...”
Evidence

Show that you really are thinking about, and doing, the things that you are writing about

Tip: refer liberally to appendices
What is your learning based on?

What do you know?  How do you know that?

Claim + Evidence + Reasoning = Explanation

Why does your evidence support your claim?
Example

“I was keen to ensure that the students knew what they would be expected to know by the end of my session. I found the acronym ‘MMUCKO’ in the ‘Planning and Evaluating Your Teaching’ workshop (Appendix 2) useful as it reminded me that I needed to have clear learning objectives at the outset of the tutorial. The feedback from the previous carousel of students (Appendix 3) had suggested that some of them had not really learned what I hoped they would, so I decided to …”
Pitfalls

Using lots of description

Writing an academic essay

Not referencing appendices
Academic vs reflective writing

**Academic**

- Subject not personal
- Writing is the *representation* of learning
- Writing is the *product* of the thinking process

**Reflective**

- Subject matter personal
- Writing is for the *purpose* of learning
- Writing involves the *process* of thinking
More support for reflective writing


The ‘Resources’ section, especially resource numbers:
1: map of RW (p 184-5)
2: initial guidance (186-189)
5: examples of different ‘depths’ of RW: ‘The Park’ (p196-203)
7: questions to support RW (210-211)
9: framework for RW (p214-216)
So, how can you best get started?
Gather things to reflect on...

• Learning cards for at least three workshops
• ‘Teaching Observation and Feedback’ document (including the ‘self-reflection’ part)
• Record or log of your teaching
• Feedback from your learners (and any reflections you have on this)
• Anything else you think is useful to reflect on
Part 1: 3000-3500 words

Choose two aspects of your practice. Select specific examples. Reflect on these in detail in the light of your learning about clinical education, and about yourself as a clinical educator, on the CEP. Make liberal references to your appendices to illustrate what you are saying.

1. Designing and planning learning activities.
2. Teaching and supporting learning.
3. Assessing and giving feedback.
4. Developing effective learning environments; offering support.
5. Integrating scholarship, research and professional activities.
Consider your ‘philosophy of clinical education’. Draw on some of the specific examples used in Part 1 and frame these more generally in the context of your values and your beliefs about clinical education.

1. Respecting learners and diverse communities.
2. Promoting participation in higher education.
4. Developing and evaluating practice.
5. Constraints and affordances of research / clinical setting.
Plan your assignment

- In groups of 3-4: 20 minutes
  - Individually plan your approach to the assignment
  - Then share your ideas with your group
  - Then circulate around the room if you like
  - Ask me for help at any time
And finally …

• Any other questions?

• Please complete the feedback forms
References


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