

Reflective Writing

One of the most common ways to reflect is making it explicit through writing; however in order for the reflection to be useful, it has to go beyond merely a description of events. Different levels of reflective writing have been identified:

1. **Descriptive writing:** This is a description of events or literature reports. There is no discussion beyond description. This writing is considered not to show evidence of reflection. It is important to acknowledge that some parts of a reflective account will need to describe the context – but in this case, writing does not go beyond description.
2. **Descriptive reflection:** There is basically a description of events, but the account shows some evidence of deeper consideration in relatively descriptive language. There is no real evidence of the notion of alternative viewpoints in use.
3. **Dialogic reflection:** This writing suggests that there is a ‘stepping back’ from the events and actions which leads to a different level of discourse. There is a sense of ‘mulling about’, discourse with self and an exploration of the role of self in events and actions. There is consideration of the qualities of judgements and of possible alternatives for explaining and hypothesising. The reflection is analytical or integrative, linking factors and perspectives.
4. **Critical reflection:** This form of reflection, in addition to dialogic reflection, shows evidence that the learner is aware that the same actions and events may be seen in different contexts with different explanations associated with the contexts. They are influenced by ‘multiple historical and socio-political contexts’, for example.

(Moon, 2001; Developed from Hatton and Smith, 1995)