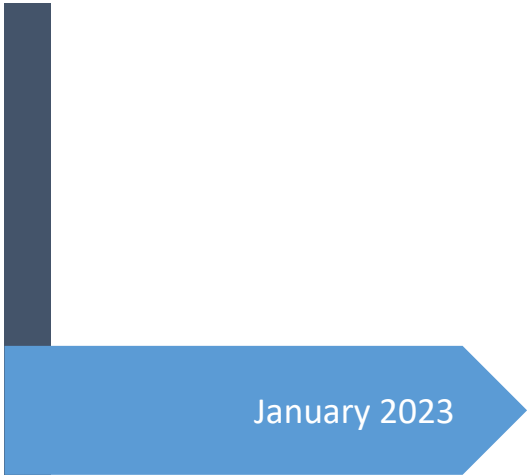
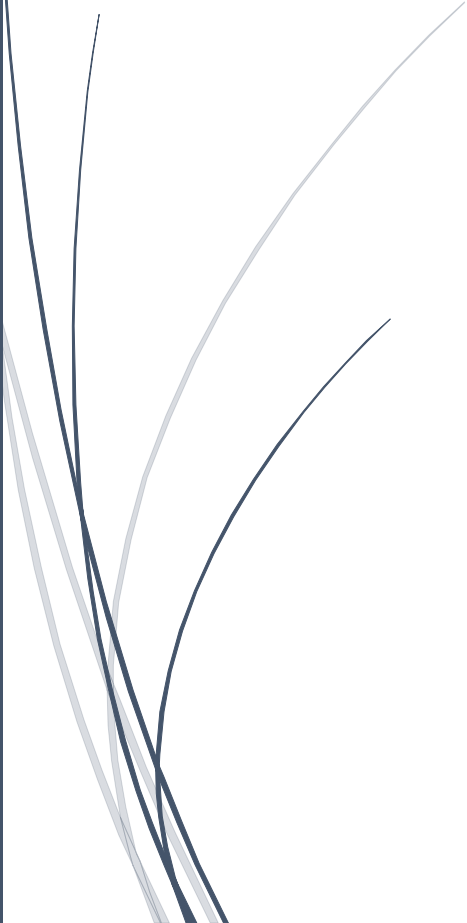


A dark blue vertical bar runs down the left side of the page. A blue arrow points to the right from the bar, containing the date.

January 2023

# Evidence of Learning E-Portfolio

Learning in the Digital Era ECGE4005P/C

Several thin, curved lines in dark blue and light grey originate from the bottom left and sweep upwards and to the right.

Shelley Holmes (2217784)

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# Diving in!

As I sat down to write my first blog, apprehension descended! The thoughts that were supposed to be filled with ideas about reflection were filled with self-doubt.

I am instantly transported on a wave of negative emotions to Math class age 13!

I can't write a blog! I'm going to fail! I take a breath, step away and venture outside to clear my head.



(Teachwire, no date).

"Failure is instructive. The person who really thinks learns quite as much from his failures as from his successes" (Dewey, 2008, p. 206).

I find myself having a familiar conversation with the inner me, trying to calm the self-doubting thoughts. **I'm not 13!** I had written essays before, not the same but I could build on those skills. The negative emotions start shifting towards more positive thoughts. I suddenly realised that I was doing the very thing I was supposed to be writing about.....

**Reflecting!**

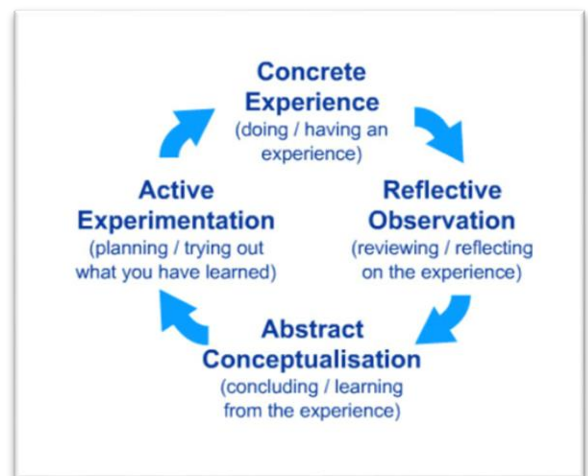
The concept of **reflection** was first described over 100 years ago by Dewey (1859 – 1952) in the book titled "How we think" (1910). Fast forward to today and reflection is prominent in many areas especially in education, there are many reflection models all of which conceptualise that reflection is essential to meaningful learning.

## Why not dive into the pool of reflection for yourself..

Here are a few to get you started....

Using his reflective cycle Kolb described learning as "the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience"  
(Kolb, 2015, p.47).

### Kolb reflective cycle (1984)



(Lifelong learning with the QT, 2016)

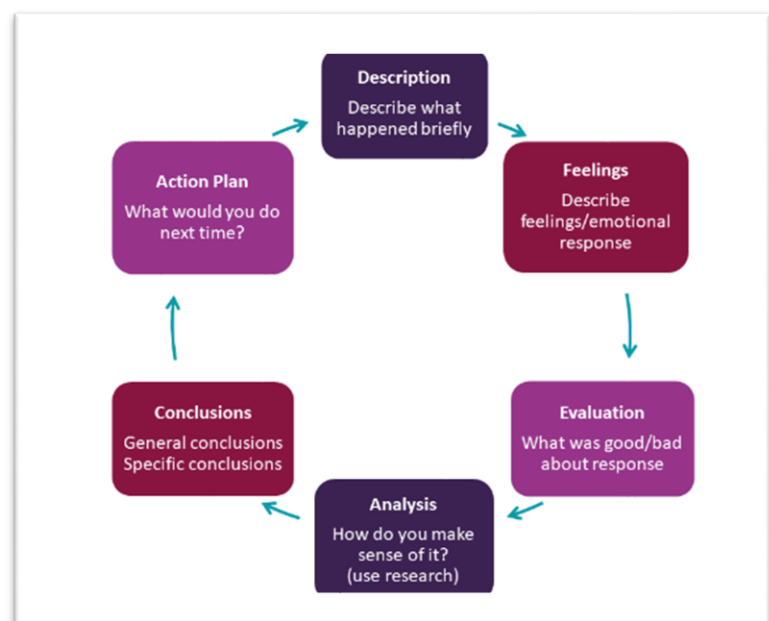
### Jasper ERA Cycle (2013)



Jasper's simple reflection cycle may be for you.

(Reflective writing tips, 2022)

### Gibbs Reflective Cycle (1998)



(University of Hull, 2022)

Or maybe you would prefer Gibbs Reflective Cycle (1988)?

## Boud, Keogh and Walker (1985)

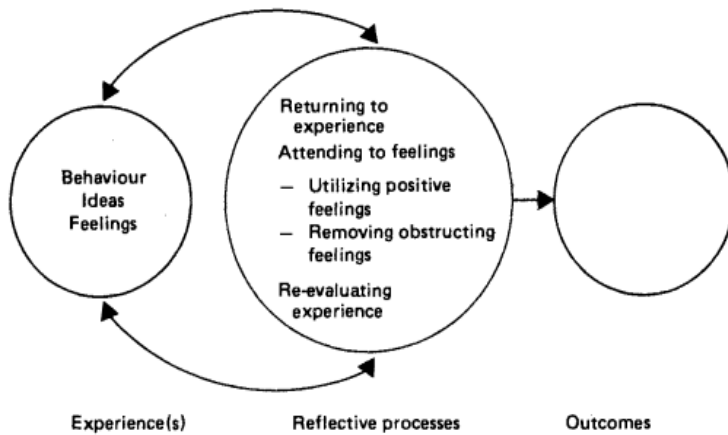


Figure 2 Components of reflection

My unconscious reflection model was Boud, Keogh, and Walker (1985). Simplistic and unlike some earlier models incorporates feelings, good and bad.

## But do I really need reflection I hear you ask?

A study by Colomer et al (2013) found that reflective methods enhanced the learning process encouraging not only critical thinking and independent learning but the development of strategies to overcome new challenges. The same views were echoed by Fullana et al (2016) whose studies showed similar results with students feeling it would benefit their future and professional progress.

Tempted yet? Go on.... take a look.....





Boud and Walker (1998) make some good points. Are we overwhelmed with reflection models? Could we get too focused on the methods of reflection and miss the point? Are they too basic or too complicated and being used out of context?

Whatever your thoughts, apply some common sense, select a method relevant to the situation and context. It wouldn't work adopting the same reflection technique every time.

Don't pick a method like Gibbs (1988) if you just need to think quickly on your feet, why not try Schon (2016):

- Reflection IN Action
- Reflection ON Action

Looking back ([Reflecting!](#)) I see a familiar pattern, my brain will often go off in a sea of self-doubt and I would bring it back with the power of reflection and draw on my previous experiences and dive in. Whatever your situation I'm sure there's a reflection method for you. Reflection can really be a powerful leaning tool if applied appropriately and in context so.....

## Why not dive in to reflection for yourself?



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**What is good time management?**

This essay is going to explore the aspects of time management and the effects of procrastination. Good time management is frequently mentioned as being an essential skill when it comes to the world of work and is classed as a prerequisite for an effective manager. It can, however, often be overlooked as a critical life skill which is needed in all aspects of life. Establishing good work life balance and effective time management is essential for students, not only for successful study outcomes but also for health and wellbeing. Being a part time, mature student with a job, family and other commitments it is important to understand how significant effective time management is to success and to be able to organise, prioritise, meet deadlines and avoid distractions (Cottrell, 2019, p.123). There are a number of ways to manage time, one can become overwhelmed with the amount of time management tools available making it difficult to distinguish which methods to use in order to be a successful student.

Without effective time management there is a danger that time can be wasted by inefficiency. Being an adult learner with a family and other responsibilities, distractions will be common place. Thinking ahead trying to minimise these distractions by allocating time for study and forming a support network of family and friends to assist can help to lighten the load. It is imperative to be self-aware, know study time requirements and assess how, when and where study time takes place and how effective it is. Taking into account all tasks and personal responsibilities as well as factoring in leisure time will give a clearer indication of where time is being spent currently and how well time it is being used, highlighting areas for improvement (Cottrell, 2019, p.123). Planners, calendars and daily schedules can be useful tools, there are a number of digital apps and scheduling programmes that can assist the tech savvy. Having a daily plan can maintain focus and avoid unnecessary time wasting. Using the “Eat that frog” technique (Tracy, no date) and starting the day with the most difficult task, something meaningful, will give a sense of achievement and once completed will have a motivational effect. SMART goals are often used as a positive time management tool and goal setting has positive links with maintaining focus, success and achievement (Doran, 1981, p. 35–36). Consider “How do you eat an elephant? One bite at a time” technique, breaking down any large overwhelming tasks or goals into smaller more manageable chunks to help maintain focus and keep the goals achievable minimising time wasting (Fournier 2018). Another consideration

stated by Parkinson in the article “Parkinson’s Law” (1955) is “Work expands so as to fill the time available for its completion.” The same can apply to students, regularly assessing time management techniques and how time is being spent should allow for a more comprehensive schedule thus avoiding the misconception that there is plenty of time to complete tasks which can often lead to procrastination.

Procrastination is an extremely common phenomena with students, a study at the University of Bristol in 2017 showed that 97% of 201 students were effected by procrastination. 48% of these students procrastinated either all the time or on a regular basis with 80% of those students suffering from anxiety. Procrastination can occur for a number of different reasons, those reported commonly amongst students in the study were lack of motivation, laziness, work difficulty, fear of failure, stress, personal issues and distractions from peers and the internet (He, 2017). Regardless of the reasons for procrastination various studies have shown it can have negative effects. Stead, Shanahan and Neufeld, (2010, p.175–180) reported poor mental health amongst procrastinators. Kim and Seo (2015, p.6) confirmed a link between procrastination and lower academic performance. Nguyen, Steel, and Ferrari, (2013) highlighted greater associations with unemployment, lower working hours and salaries. Being aware of procrastination and looking at ways to manage it, set goals and get back on track are a necessity.

As a mature student juggling responsibilities it can be easy to lose track of time and allow procrastination to take hold. Despite studies showing the positive effects of time management on academic performance (Razali et al. 2018) there are contradictions with regards to the overall effectiveness of some methods used. In the BBC article “Why we should all give up on goals already” Ruggeri (2017) discusses how setting strict goals can be counterproductive. Ruggeri suggests strict goal setting can suppress the enjoyment and the learning experience, effecting creativity and can cause individuals to rush, make mistakes and even be unethical in their approach. Despite these differences some commonality can be found with regards to time management, Macan (1990) stated positive results from students who perceived they had control of their time. Students were found to be more contented with life and work and felt less stressed and more in control which aligns with Kearns and Gardiner (2007).

As each individual is different various factors will need to be considered before a time management plan can be formulated, it is likely there will be disparities between each individual's time management plans due to individual needs. In the digital age of apps, planning and scheduling programmes there are a considerable amount of different ways to manage time. It is important to consider how time is being utilised currently, where the needs are and apply relevant strategies to meet those needs. Improving time management skills, avoiding procrastination and finding the most appropriate method of time management for each individual is key and can provide benefits, not just for students but life in general. Having time management awareness and using appropriate strategies helps lower stress levels and increases academic performance which is key to being a resilient and healthy independent learner.

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# CRITICAL THINKING

SHELLEY HOLMES

## QUOTE

"Critical thinking is the ability to think in an organized and rational manner in order to understand connections between ideas and/or facts. It helps you decide what to believe in. In other words, it's "thinking about thinking"—identifying, analysing, and then fixing flaws in the way we think" (Tomaszewski, 2022).

## DICTIONARY DEFINITION

The objective analysis and evaluation of an issue in order to form a judgement (Stevenson, 2010).

## BLOOM'S TAXONOMY FOR STUDENTS

Develop critical thinking by using these High order skills:

**Analyse** - Why? How? What if? Disassembling information to understand parts, causes, connections and determine relationships. Look at things from different angles and points of view.

**Evaluate**: So what? What next? Why is it relevant. Make a decision or judgement. Form an opinion or a conclusion

**Create**: Produce or develop new ideas, work and opinions. Find solutions, solve problems, Invent, develop, be creative (Ruhl 2021).

## HISTORY

Critical thinking in its original form dates back to Socrates over 2500 years ago. Socrates encouraged the use of a variety of probing questions to objectively explore ideas and beliefs assessing their validity before forming opinions (U.S. Department of Education 1997).

## MYTHS VS FACTS

## PRESENT DAY

Critical thinking is a sought after skill, The World Economic Forum (2020) predicts the need for critical thinking and problem solving will significantly increase in the next few years becoming one of the most desirable employment skills (Whiting 2020). These findings are echoed in a report by the FYA (2017) who predict a 40% rise in the need for critical thinking skills by 2030.

Exhibit 12: In 2030, some skills will need to be used in billions more hours of work across the economy

| Skill                  | 2014 (bn) | 2030 (bn) |
|------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Critical thinking      | 5.3       | 9.1       |
| Written communications | 6.3       | 8.9       |
| Learning               | 4.6       | 7.6       |
| Problem solving        | 3.0       | 6.0       |
| Science & maths        | 2.6       | 5.6       |
| Organisational         | 5.1       | 5.0       |
| Management             | 4.7       | 4.5       |
| Teaching               | 4.2       | 3.0       |
| Verbal communication   | 3.9       | 1.9       |
| Advanced technology    | 3.8       | 3.0       |
| Interpersonal          | 3.8       | 3.8       |

(FYA, 2017)

## HOW TO DEVELOP CRITICAL THINKING

Blooms Taxonomy is a learning approach originally created in 1956 by American psychologist Benjamin Bloom and later revised by Lorin Anderson in 2001. The taxonomy can be used by building on the foundational knowledge gained on the lower order thinking skills: remembering, understanding and applying. Once established this will allow progress up the hierarchy to the higher order thinking skills: analysing, evaluating and creating, developing further knowledge and higher level critical thinking skills (Ruhl 2021).

**Bloom's Taxonomy**

- create**: Produce new or original work; design, assemble, construct, develop, formulate, author, investigate
- evaluate**: Justify a stand or decision; appraise, argue, defend, judge, select, support, sustain, critique, weigh
- analyze**: Draw connections among ideas; differentiate, organize, relate, compare, contrast, distinguish, examine, experiment, speculate, test
- apply**: Use information in new situations; execute, implement, solve, use, demonstrate, interpret, operate, adapt, adjust
- understand**: Explain ideas or concepts; classify, describe, discuss, explain, identify, locate, recognize, report, select, translate
- remember**: Recall facts and basic concepts; define, describe, list, relate, repeat, state

## THINGS TO BE AWARE OF

- Is the argument a deductive or ampliative argument?
- Is it being approached with an open mind?
- Do you have any preconceived ideas and opinions?
- Avoid fallacies
- Look out for nuances
- Personal preferences

(BBC Ideas 2021)

## REMEMBER

- Be emotionally intelligent
- Look at positives and negatives, explore from all angles before forming an opinion.
- Intellectual humility

## BE A DETECTIVE!

- Identify the line of reasoning.
- Where is the information from?
- Is it reliable and trustworthy?
- Are there any vested interests or ulterior motives?
- Check for bias.
- Is it logical?
- Is it valid?
- Has it been peer reviewed?
- Is the conclusion supported by the premises?
- Is more information required?
- Is there enough evidence to support the claim?

(Cottrell 2019)

## ADVANTAGES OF DEVELOPING CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS

(tscfm, 2022)

"Critical Thinking is the ability to look at a situation and clearly understand it from multiple perspectives whilst separating facts from opinions and assumptions" (Pearson no date)

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