



Reflective writing

“It is not sufficient to have an experience in order to learn. Without reflecting on this experience it may quickly be forgotten, or its learning potential lost” (Gibbs, 1988, p.9).

When do we reflect for academic work?

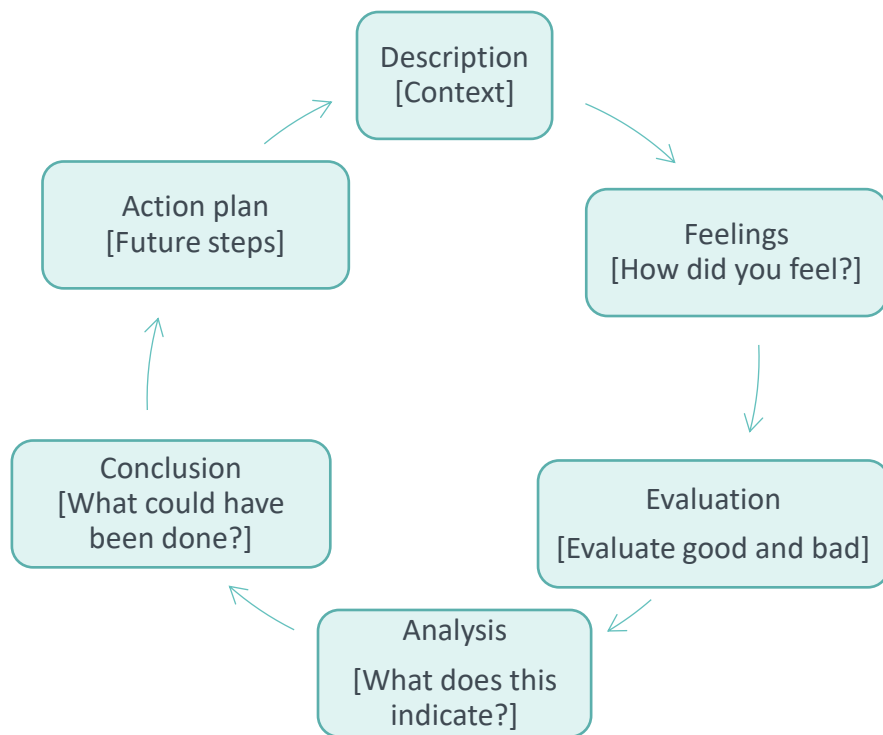
We reflect quite naturally in our day to day lives, thinking about things that have happened, why they happened, and whether we handled them well. In academia, you may be asked to formalise your reflections to show that learning is taking place. This may involve:

- Reflecting on your own professional or academic practice
- Scrutinising an experience and the way you dealt with it
- Evaluating a project or experiment and considering how to do it better next time.
- Reflecting on things you have read and linking theory with practice/reality.

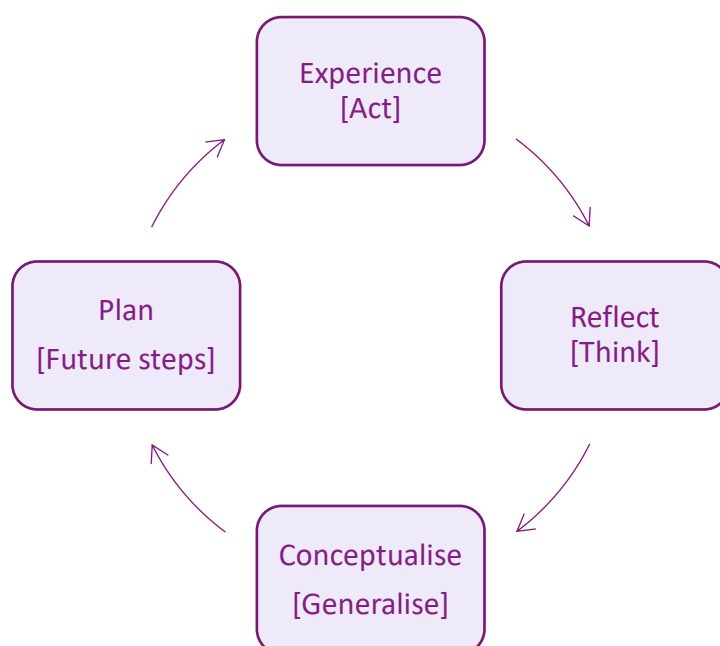
There are **frameworks** that you can use to aid your reflective process. You might already be familiar with Kolb's and Gibbs' Reflective Cycle models (see next page).



Gibbs' Reflective Learning Cycle



Kolb's Reflective Cycle



See below useful list of verbs to use to articulate reflection:

Having ...

read

experienced

applied

discussed

analysed

learned

I now ...

think

feel

know

notice

question

realise

More useful phrases:

In addition, I have learnt that ...

I have developed my skills / competence / awareness / ability to ...

I have improved my understanding of ...

This means that ...

This is important to me as a student of ... / as a human being because ...

I now realise that I am not yet confident about ... / I will need to ...

My next step will be ...

Further Study:

McMillan, K. and Weyers, J., (2013). *How to Improve your Critical Thinking & Reflective Skills*. Harlow: Pearson Education.