

Moving from descriptive to reflective writing

Descriptive writing is an important starting point in any reflective task as you are required to provide detail about the context to which you are referring to as well as the events or experiences that you have observed. The following table shows the kinds of questions which can help as you move from descriptive to reflective writing.

Descriptive writing	Questions to generate descriptive writing
May cover some of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • context • observations • own behaviour • behaviour of others • own reactions • reactions of others 	What happened? What is the focus of the account? What did I observe? How did I behave? How did others behave? What were my reactions? What were the reactions of others?
Reflective writing	Questions to generate reflective writing
May incorporate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • exploration of issues • processes of relating information • exploration of motives/reasons for behaviours • reinterpretation of issues from different viewpoints or by taking into account different contextual factors 	Why are the issues raised? What is their significance? How does what happened, or my reaction to what happened relate to other information (e.g. course information, ideas of others, readings) Why did I behave in this way? Why did others behave the way they did? What would the situation look like from another perspective? If I looked at this situation from a different perspective, would I see things differently?



<ul style="list-style-type: none">• theorising• linking theory and practice • willingness to be critical of actions of self or others, self-questioning, internal dialogue • recognition that cultural values and subjective perceptions /frames of reference affect how we reflect • recognition that prior experience and thoughts (of self and others) can influence current behaviour • recognition of role of emotion in shaping ideas and framing accounts • recognition that time and spending time thinking about an idea can impact our perceptions • recognition that learning can be gained from the experience• noting of 'points of learning'	<p>Are there any theories I've read about that relate to this situation? How does a particular theory relate to what I experienced/observed/felt? Can I theorise about what happened? Can I find support for my theory?</p> <p>Why did I act the way I did, and how did it affect what happened? What were other possible courses of action, and how would outcomes have been different if I had followed them? Why did others act the way they did, and how did it affect what happened? What were other possible courses of action, and how would outcomes have been different if they had followed them?</p> <p>What was influencing my behaviour at that time? Did I (and others) consider ethical, moral, socio-political, historical factors which could potentially provide another way of seeing an event/an issue?</p> <p>How did my previous experiences and thoughts influence my behaviour? How might the previous experiences and thoughts of others have influenced their behaviour?</p> <p>Why did I feel what I did? How did my emotional response influence what happened?</p> <p>Would I feel/act the same now or if I was in the same situation again? How has time changed my perspective on these issues?</p> <p>What have I learnt? Where will I go next with this? What other information do I need to develop this line of reflection further?</p>
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Adapted from Moon, J 2004, *Handbook of reflective and experiential learning: theories and practice*, Routledge Falmer, New York.