

RUBRIC FOR ASSESSING A REFLECTIVE JOURNAL¹

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As you move from left to right in this table, reflection increases. We have tried to capture the sense of deepening reflection with the words “Describing,” “Understanding,” “Reflecting,” and Transforming. We would expect you to aspire most of the time to attain the Reflecting stage in your writing, and at least some of the time, the Transforming stage.

	Describing	Understanding	Reflecting	Transforming
Nature of the account	Account is descriptive, with little or no reflection. A story is told, but mainly or entirely from one viewpoint. Ideas or recollections of events are linked by sequence rather than meaning.	Account is descriptive and signals points for possible reflection. Events are treated as though they might raise an important question or questions to be asked and answered. There may be reference to another viewpoint.	Account is descriptive and accents points for actual reflection. There is reference to other viewpoints and external ideas, and analysis of the actions of self or others. There is some standing back from events in an effort to recognize the effect of the events on the self.	Description serves the reflective process. Account recognizes that the frame of reference for an event can change. Events are understood in a historical, social or psychological context that influences reactions to them—in other words, multiple viewpoints are considered.
Emotional reactions	There are no references to emotional reactions, or if there are, they do not get explored or related to behaviour of self or others.	Emotional reactions of self or others are mentioned or clearly influence the writing. Such influences are noted and questioned.	Emotional reactions are recognized and their influence is questioned. An attempt is made to consider their role in analyzing behaviour of self or others.	Emotional reactions are recognized, both in the sense of shaping ideas and in considering how they can frame the account in different ways. Reactions may trigger or support a change in perspective.
Reference to literature or theory	There are no references to theory, or if there are, they are made without apparently trying to understand them or form a view on them.	There is some reference to theory, with an attempt to understand it. But concepts are treated just as theory, without being related to personal experiences or practical situations.	There are references to theory, showing both an understanding and an application of it. Concepts are interpreted in relation to personal experiences, or situations encountered in practice are considered and discussed in relation to theory.	There are references to theory, showing understanding and application as well as a questioning stance. Theory helps to trigger a transformation of perspective—a review of presuppositions from prior conscious or unconscious learning.
Reference to experience or future practice	There are no references to prior experience or lessons to be learned for future practice. The description may, though, form a basis for such learning.	There is some attempt to connect events to prior experience and a sense that events could lead to lessons for future practice. However, the reflection needs to be deeper to enable the learning to begin to occur.	There are references both to prior experience and lessons for future practice. There is an attempt to use events to analyze progress in attaining learning goals.	There is recognition of how prior experiences—of self and others—influence current behaviour. Points for learning are noted and may be revisited in later accounts. The journal shows growth over a course of study.

¹ Inspired by Jennifer Moon, *Learning Journals: A Handbook for Reflective Practice and Professional Development* (2d edn, Routledge 2006) (ebook Resource 2) and David Kember, Jan McKay, Kit Sinclair & Frances Kam Yuet Wong, ‘A four-category scheme for coding and assessing the level of reflection in written work’ (2008) 33:4 *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education* 369. Assessment rubrics apply *descriptors* (columns) to *dimensions* (rows). Moon uses the descriptors ‘Descriptive writing,’ ‘Descriptive account with some reflection,’ ‘Reflective writing (1)’ and ‘Reflective writing (2).’ Kember *et al* use ‘Habitual action/non-reflection,’ ‘Understanding,’ ‘Reflection’ and ‘Critical reflection.’ Both authors recognize, implicitly or explicitly, that these are descriptors or categories of convenience and are not watertight: reflective practices and reflective writing exist on a continuum. The descriptors used here are our own attempt to simplify and track this continuum. The dimensions are distilled chiefly from Moon’s work on learning journals for the professions.

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