Reflection Models

What? So what? Now what?

A simple, yet powerful model. Ideal for in-class assignments, short reflection assignments, and for introducing students to reflection in academic contexts. Provides minimal guidance to allow students to explore their reflective process.

What? / Describe the experience from your perspective. *What happened? What did you notice? What did you learn? What did you feel?*
So what? / Explain the impact or relevance of the experience. *What does it matter? What did you learn? What are the impacts?*
Now what? / Evaluate your experience, your reactions and consequences of the experience. *What would you do differently next time? What knowledge/skills/competencies do you want to develop as a result?*

Developed by Rolfe et al (2001).

DEAL

An intermediate model for reflection, D.E.A.L. can help students make their experiential learning process visible and draw explicit connections to course content.

D / Description the experiences in detail. *What happened? Where and when did it happen? Who was involved? How did I react?*
E / Examine the experience through learning objectives and goals. *What course concepts are represented in the experience? What course concepts, theories, etc. Can help me make sense of it? What skills/competencies did I use?*
A / Articulation your learning. *What did I learn and how? How did I build on my existing knowledge? Why does this new knowledge matter?*
L / Learning goals. *What do I need to learn/develop now? What experiences will allow me to practice my new knowledge/skills/competencies? How can my instructor support my continuous learning?*

Developed by Ash & Clayton (2009).

Gibbs' Model

A comprehensive model to encourage deeper introspection. This model asks students to evaluate their affective responses and to create action plans. Well suited for larger reflection assignments after students had the opportunity to practice with simple models like *What? So What? Now What?*

Description / Describe the experience. *What happened? What did you do? What was the outcome of the experience? What did you want to happen?*
Feelings / State the feelings and reactions you had about the experience. *What were you feeling before and after the experience? What were you thinking during the experience? What do you think of the experience now?*
Evaluation / Provide evaluations of the experience, both positive and negative. *What did you enjoy about the experience? What was challenging? What was easy? What would you have liked to happen differently?*
Analysis / Analyze the experience. *Why did you feel that way? Why did some aspects feel easy and other challenging? Why would you like the experience to have been different?*
Conclusion / Reconciling the experience through learning. *What did I learn from this experience? How can I prepare for future experiences like this one? What skills/competencies/knowledges do I want to develop as a result of this experience?*
Action plan / Create an action plan for growth and development. *How will I develop those skills/competencies/knowledge? How can my instructor support me? How can I continue practicing and challenging myself to grow in this area?*

Developed by Gibbs (1988).