

Guidelines for the post-project paper

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What are reflection papers?

A reflection paper is an academic essay in which you reflect on a course experience. In this course, you write a reflection paper on your project. To *reflect* (in the sense in which this word is used here) means that you critically examine your experience and explicitly articulate what you have learned.

Why write reflection papers?

Writing a reflection paper offers you the opportunity to process an experience and think about how it has helped your learning. As [Gibbs \(1988\)](#) writes, '[i]t is not sufficient simply to have an experience in order to learn. Without reflecting upon this experience, it may quickly be forgotten, or its learning potential lost.' Reflective writing also trains your analytical skills, as it requires you to link your experience to your existing knowledge. For me (the examiner), a reflection paper is a means to assess to what extent you have achieved a learning objective.

How to write reflection papers?

There are many ways to write reflection papers, but for this assignment I ask you to structure your paper into the same three parts that we also use in the lab series:¹

1. *Describe* your project experience, in fair detail and as objectively as possible. Focus on things that let you illustrate what you have learned.
2. *Examine* your project experience and link it to relevant concepts and skills from the course. See below for prompts that will help you with this.
3. *Articulate* your learning: What did you learn? How, specifically, did you learn that? Why does this learning matter?

¹This structure is based on the DEAL Model for Critical Reflection ([Ash and Clayton, 2004](#)).

Part 1: Describe your experience

This part lays the foundation for your reflections. Your goal should be to make your project experience present by describing it in an *objective* and *detailed* way. Do not jump straight into interpretations; provide the facts. However, do not simply recount the events from start to end; focus on aspects that were significant for your learning.

Prompts The following prompts may help you when writing the description:

- How did you prepare yourself for the project? Which sources did you consult?
- What was your role in the project? What were the roles of the others?
- If you wrote any code, what exactly did you implement?
- If you performed any experiments, what results did you get?
- Which feedback did you get during the project and at the project presentation?

Part 2: Examine your experience

In this part you move beyond a mere description of your project. Instead, your goal here should be to critically examine your experience, and to connect it to the course content and any additional reading that you did for the project.

Prompts Respond to the following prompt:²

What specific concepts and skills were relevant to your project? Explain these concepts and skills so that a fellow student who is not in the course could understand them. How exactly did you use these concepts and skills in the project?

For a higher grade, you can also address the following, more advanced prompts:

- What similarities, what differences were there between your prior understanding of the course content and the way in which it emerged in the project?
- Based on your experience and your analysis, was your understanding of the course content and any additional reading adequate? If not, what exactly was lacking?
- How has the project enhanced your understanding? Given what you know now, how would you do the project today?

²The prompts were adapted from [Duke Service-Learning \(2018\)](#).

Part 3: Articulate your learning

In the last part of your paper, you sum up your reflections by explicitly articulating what you have learned.

Prompts Respond to all of the following three prompts:

- What did you learn? Express an important learning, not just a fact.
- How, exactly, did you learn it? Connect your learning to specific details in your description and insights from your analysis.
- Why does your learning matter? What value does the learning have for you? How will you use it? Consider how your experience has helped you achieve the learning objective for the project module:

On completion of the course, the student should be able to judge the difficulty and the feasibility of language technology applications.

Additional tips

Here are some additional tips that can help you write a good reflection paper:

- Make sure you understand the context and purpose of the project. What you write should be relevant for the learning objective.
- Before you start with the paper, review any material related to the project and jot down things that stand out in your mind. For example, think about what you found especially interesting, surprising, or hard.
- Make it understandable. Imagine that you are writing the paper for a fellow student who is not in the course. I (the examiner) will read your paper as if I were such a student. Explain all concepts.
- Keep it short and sweet. The suggested length of a reflection paper in this course is 1,500 words (ca. 3 pages of text). This means that you will have to make an active selection of what to describe and analyse.
- Work with the text. I will assess your paper as a piece of academic writing. Stick to one central idea per paragraph. Aim for a good flow. Use an academic language (but do use first person pronouns). Check for typos and errors in grammar.
- Plan ahead. A good reflection paper needs work, and work takes time. For a paper of 1,500 words, I expect you to invest approximately 16 working hours. Make sure to reserve that time in your schedule. Do not wait until the last minute.

How are reflection papers assessed?

When grading your post-project paper, I will assess it with respect to the criteria spelled out in the rubric below. For each criterion, I will assign one of the scores 0 (below expectation), 3 (meets expectation), or 5 (exceeds expectation). The descriptors for each score hopefully give you a good idea of what I am looking for. Together with your grade, you will receive a short written motivation based on the rubric.

	Below expectation (0)	Meets expectation (3)	Exceeds expectation (5)
<i>Description</i>	Emotional description of the project and your role in it. Lack of details and examples.	Objective description of the project and your role in it. Several details and examples.	(not applicable)
<i>Examination</i>	Fails to show which concepts and skills from the course emerged in the project, and how. Hard to follow for someone not in the course.	Considers how specific concepts and skills emerged in the project. Explains concepts and skills so that someone not in the course can understand them.	Develops an enhanced understanding of concepts and skills from the course and additional reading in light of the project experience.
<i>Articulation of Learning</i>	Not clear what you learned, how exactly you learned it, or how this learning is relevant.	Clear what you learned, how exactly you learned it, and how the learning is relevant.	(not applicable)
<i>Formal aspects</i>	Paragraphs are disorganised. Several errors in grammar and punctuation. Mostly informal language.	Each paragraph has a central idea. Few errors in grammar and punctuation. Mostly academic language.	Paragraphs have a good flow. Virtually no errors in grammar and punctuation. Academic language throughout.

To get a passing grade, your score *for each criterion* must be at least 3. Your grade is determined by the total score, as specified in the following tables:

Total score	12	14	16	Total score	12	14	16	Total score	12	14	16
Grade 729G17	G	G/VG	VG	Grade 729G86	E	C	A	Grade TDP030	3	4	5

(729G86: Note that grades D and B are not given for this paper.)

References

Lorin W. Anderson and David R. Krathwohl. *A Taxonomy for Learning, Teaching, and Assessing: A Revision of Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives*. Pearson, 2001.

Sarah L. Ash and Patti H. Clayton. The Articulated Learning: An Approach to Reflection and Assessment. *Innovative Higher Education*, 29:137–154, 2004.

Duke Service-Learning. DEAL: Model for Critical Reflection Assignment Sample. Retrieved 4 November 2018 ([source](#)).

Graham Gibbs. *Learning by Doing: A Guide to Teaching and Learning Methods*. Oxford Further Education Unit, 1988.