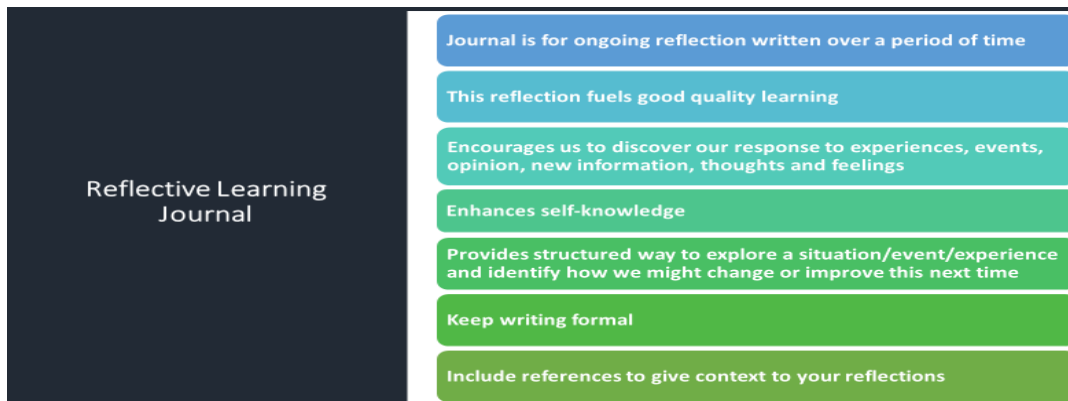


Reflective Journal Overview



What is a Reflective Learning (RL) Journal?

A Reflective Journal can be a Notebook or can be in digital form (Word doc, Memo/Notes/other Apps like Voice Memo, etc). Some examples are:-

1. learning journals, diaries, personal blogs – your thoughts in written prose
2. lists, bullet points, tables – your thoughts summarised in note form
3. audiovisual recordings – documenting your voice or using video recordings
4. visual representations – mind maps, diagrams, sketches¹

Why keep a Reflective Journal?

- It helps you order your thoughts and responses in an open, honest and structured way to assist your understanding & learning for the future
- To capture ideas for work that can be developed
- To encourage independent learning and professional development
- To enhance self-knowledge by enabling you to identify personal strengths and areas for development
- To improve formal written communication skills by practising critical writing
- To formulate plan for future actions based on reflections from events/incidents from past experiences
- To support and enrich your professional practice ensuring that you are better placed to respond to and manage new, unexpected and complex situations

How to Reflect Effectively?

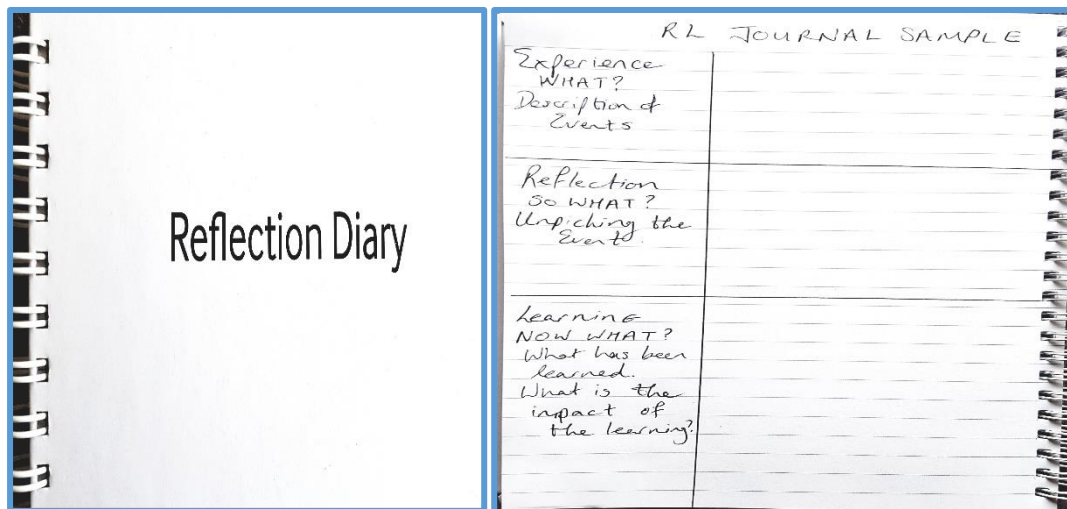
Schön² believes there are two types of reflection.

1. Reflection In-Action: often described as 'thinking on our feet'. This reflection is done while involved in the activity. It involves looking at the experience or situation as it's unfolding, connecting with our feelings and thoughts on this and thinking about what to do next. The new understandings inform our actions in the situation which are then acted on straight away.
2. Reflection On-Action: this reflection is done after the event or situation has finished. This can be done as an individual or we may talk it through with peers/ colleagues. Reflection On-Action allows us to spend time to explore why we acted as we did, what occurred and gives us ideas and questions to inform future practice.

Reflective Journal Overview

How to Write Reflectively

- Reflective writing is not simply describing something that happened or what you did, nor is it a diary or log of events. Reflective writing is about reflecting on the event that happened or our actions and starting the process of thinking & writing about what went well, what did not go well, what has been learned and what would we do differently the next time? The intention behind the reflection is learning from the reflective process or from the outcome of the reflection.
- To write reflectively it is necessary to 'step back' from a situation or incident you are reflecting on. You need to question your own values, assumptions, understandings and then reflect on the situation from different perspectives. This helps us see ourselves and our patterns of behaviour more clearly.
- Each Journal entry needs to focus on one event/ situation/ topic/ activity/ issue. Reflect on how this particular issue could be addressed or resolved or what you'd like to change or improve.
- Writing needs to be formal and objective. This can be challenging if the topic is emotive to us. Try to avoid chatty descriptive informal writing. A more analytical style of writing can provide more structured entries that are easier to read. Use terms like 'I felt', 'I noted' & 'I learnt', etc to stay focussed on your learning from the activity/situation/topic/etc.
- The RL Model Worksheets provide 'prompt questions' which can be used in RL Journals to structure the reflective learning.



REFERENCES

1. Open University, Succeeding in PostGrad Study; Session 2: Reflective thinking, reflective learning and academic writing. Free Online Course

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2. Schön, D (1983). The Reflective Practitioner: how professionals think in action. New York: Basic Books.

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Reflective Journal Overview