

## Using this Guide

Before you put pen to paper, you should first select a method for structuring your reflective writing.

You could use one of the five methods – or a combination of these methods – to start writing your reflection. Create an Outline, Free Writing, DEAL Model, Three-Stage Model, or ORID Model. Prompts for each of the 5 methods follow.

Use the guidelines and question prompts, and start composing your draft.

## Create an Outline

### Introduction:

State the main claim or purpose for this reflective piece of writing.  
What are the main lessons you learned from the experience?

What theme(s) will you explore in your reflection?

Have your views changed because of the experience?

Review past, present, and future views, thoughts, or approaches.

### Key Theme #1:

Identify the theme.

Write about the personal experience that shows support for the theme.

Connect the theme and your personal experience and/or course material.

### Key Theme #2:

Identify the theme.

Write about the personal experience that shows support for the theme.

Connect the theme and your personal experience and/or course material.

### Final Thoughts:

What would you like to highlight for the reader about your experiences, what you have learned, and how you will move forward?

## Free Writing

### Set your Timer:

Set a timer for 3 minutes (or longer).

### Let your Mind Wander:

Write freely and honestly about your experience (and of course your assignment topic). Try as much as possible to integrate theories and content that you remember from the course. When the timer buzzes, stop writing.

### Review your Writing:

Bring your free-writing draft. Highlight words and ideas that you think might require further exploration and thinking. Could these be expanded upon in your next draft? What theories or course content is missing from your free-writing piece?

## DEAL Model

### Describe:

The event/situation/experience in specific terms. You could focus on one specific event or provide an overview of a situation. You should be as precise as possible in your description.

### Examine:

The event/situation/experience from the perspective of academic learning, personal growth, or civic responsibility.

### Articulate Learning:

By sharing what you have learned and why this is important for you (academically, personally, or for your civic responsibility). You could articulate what you might do differently in the future.

## Three-Stage Model

### Stage 1: What?

Answer some or all of the following questions to begin the reflection process. Ideally, you would complete this stage as you plan and prepare for an experience. This is the “before” stage.

What do I expect to get out of this experience (goals, outcomes, purpose, ideas)?

What were my initial observations (e.g., of the placement location, interactions between people, my reactions)?

What are the goals of the agency, group, organization?

What do I already know about the specific context?

What roles am I taking on?

What happened to me today?

### Stage 2: So What?

Answer some or all of the following questions as you write about your observations and analysis of the experience. This is the “during” stage.

What did this experience mean to me?

What did I do that was effective? Why was it effective?

What am I learning about others and myself?

What did I do that seems to be ineffective? How could I have done it differently?

What values, opinions, and/or decisions have been made through this experience?

### Stage 3: Now What?

Now it is time to apply the lessons you have learned during your experience to other situations. Answer some or all of the questions as you explore new understandings about yourself and community issues. This is the “after” stage.

Is it important for me to stay involved in the community?

What will the final results of my efforts be?

How will my efforts working with these community and service agencies contribute to social change?

How can I use what I learned in my future placements or career?

What changes would I make in this experience if it were repeated?

Will I continue to be of service? Why or why not?

How does this experience exemplify or contradict module materials?

## ORID Model

### Objective:

Begin by answering questions related to your experience.

- What did you do?
- What did you observe?
- What did you read?
- What did you hear?
- Who was involved?
- What was said?
- What happened as a result of your work?

### Reflective:

Next, answer questions that address the affective experience.

- How did the experience feel?
- What did it remind you of?
- How did your apprehension change or your confidence grow?
- Did you feel successful, effective, and knowledgeable?

### Interpretive:

Now, answer questions that guide your exploration of your cognitive experience.

- What did the experience make you think?
- How did it change your thinking about...?
- What did you learn?
- What worked?

### Decisional:

Finally, think about how you will prepare yourself to incorporate your experience into a new situation.

- What will you do differently next time?
- What decisions or opinions have you formed?
- How will the experience effect your career path, your personal life choices, or your use of information, skills, or technology?