We do not learn from experience...we learn from reflecting on experience.

— John Dewey —

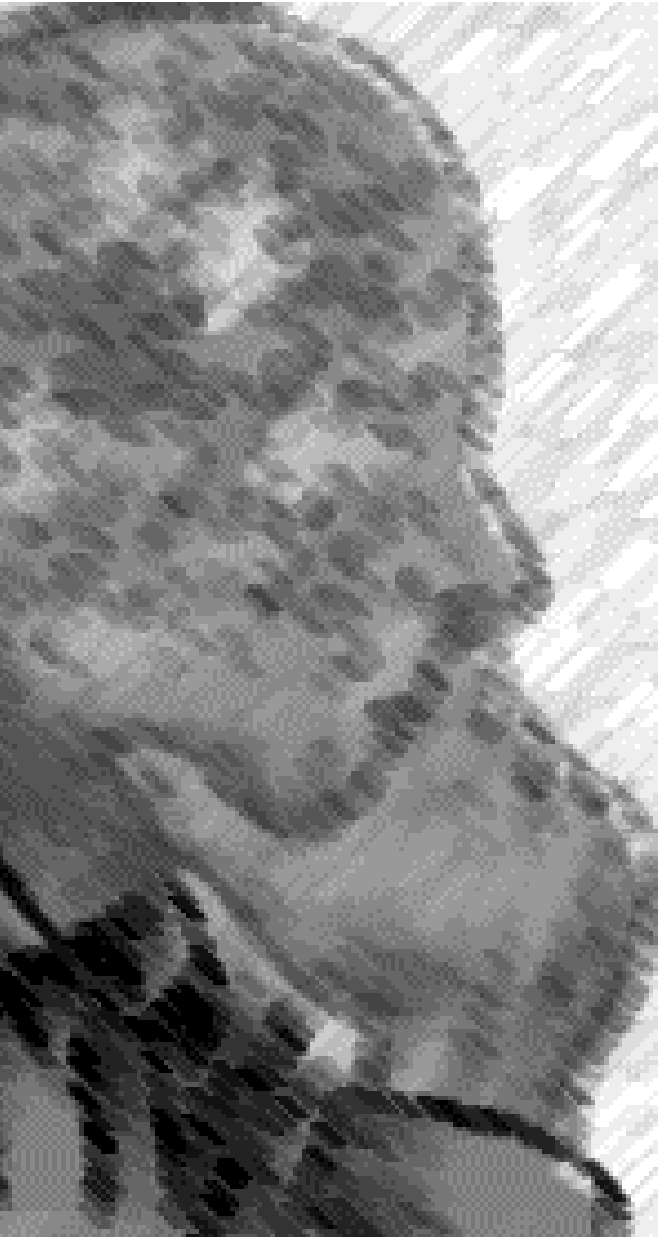# 13.2 Writing Critical Reflections

Learning Outcomes

- Develop critical thinking and writing skills

- Reflect on how you can become an effective communicator based on your experience interacting with others in CS2101 and CS2103T/CS2113T

- Be aware of the transferability of communication skills

Activity 1:
Let's discuss

1. What are critical reflections?

   – How do you <u>critically</u> reflect on your experiences?

2. What are some experiences related to communications that you can reflect on?

   – Consider the topics and concepts covered in this module.

1. Critical reflection…

- involves carefully consideration of how events and experiences have led to personal growth

- makes connections between what happened, what we learned, and how we will apply that learning in future
  - e.g. how we might think or act differently in future as a result

Is reflective writing…

- simply a summary of what happened?

- a report of how you felt during an experience?

- a summary of course notes?
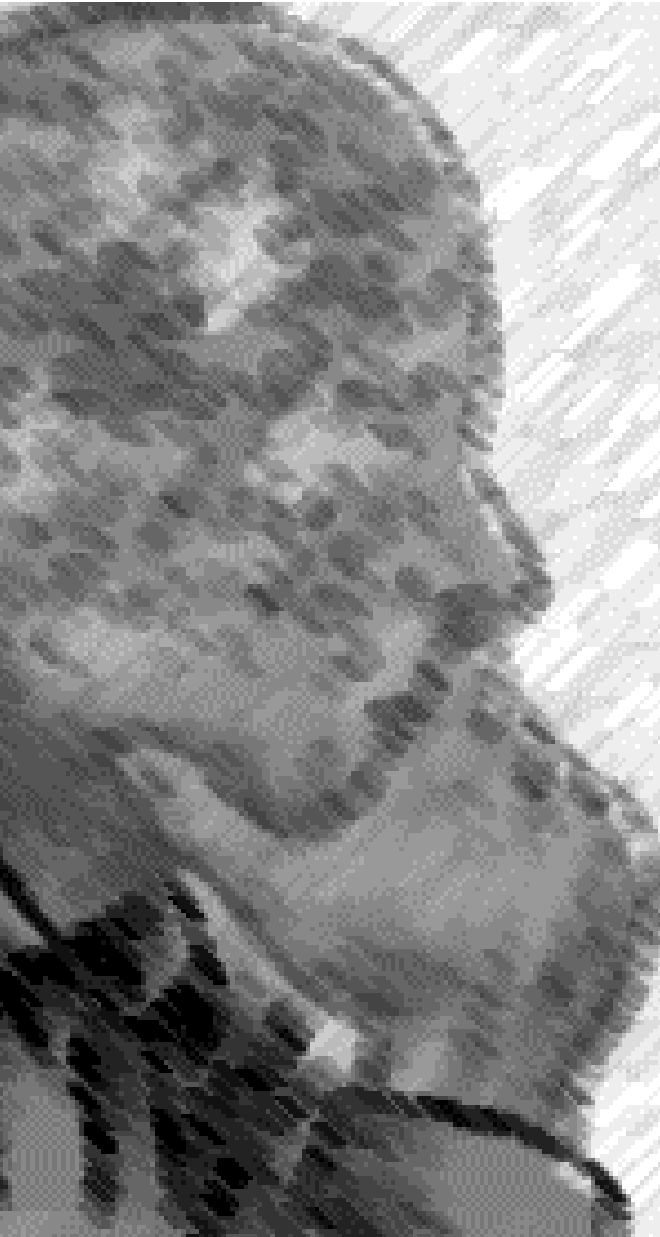
How do you reflect critically on your experiences?

A Model of Reflection
Rolfe et al. (2001)

The What

- Description of the incident/ experience

- e.g. your role, observations, reactions, emotions

- Who, what, why, when, where

So What?

- Think about the significance and relevance of the event and your view point on it

- Make general meaning of your actions and emotions (pre and post)

- Relate it to course concepts

Now What?

- Makes connections from the experience to future situations (e.g. at the workplace)

- Considers what you would do similarly or differently in future and why.

1. WHAT?

- … happened?
- … was my role in the situation?
- … was I trying to do?
- … were the consequences or results?

2. SO WHAT?

- … was good / bad about the experience?
- … feelings did it evoke in me / others?
- … were my previous expectations or assumptions which were confirmed or refuted?
- … does this imply about me or others/ the situation/ method?
- … have I learnt from the situation?
- … could I have done to make it better?
- … broader issues have arisen from the situation?

3. NOW WHAT?

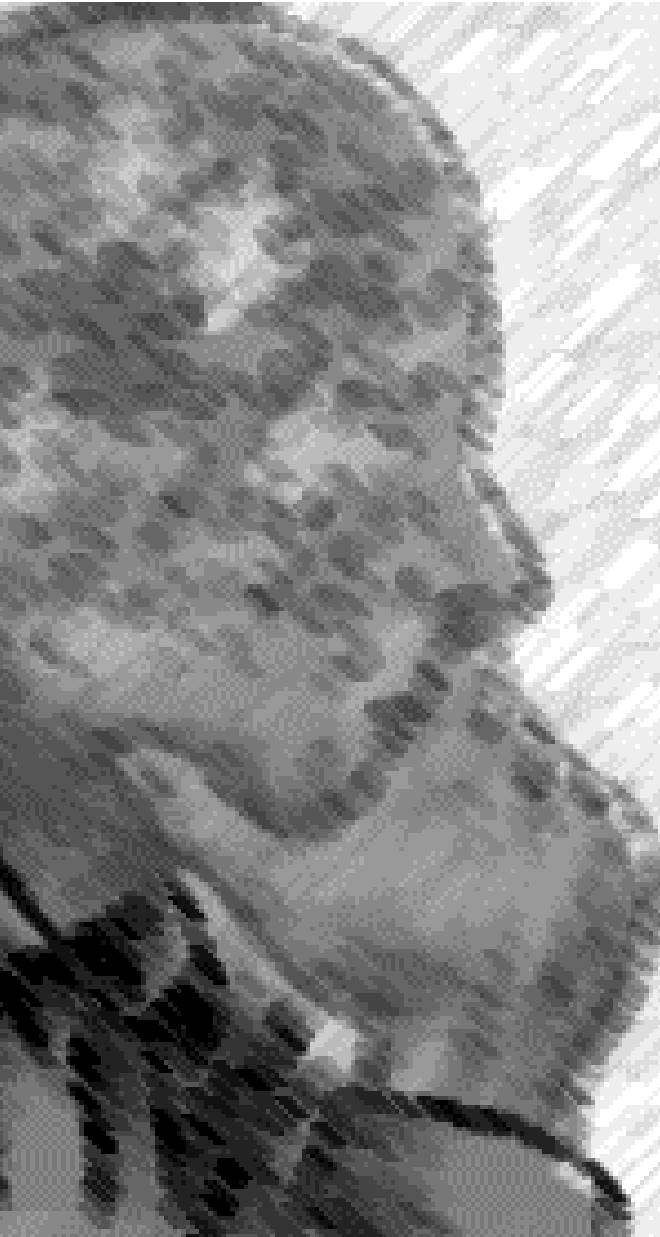- … would I do if the same thing were to happen again?

- … will I do differently next time?

- … do I need to do to make things better?

- … broader implications need to be considered to make this this action successful?

How can we get the most from every mistake we make?

— *Tony Buzan* —

2. What are some experiences related to communications that you can reflect on?

Consider the topics and concepts in this module.

Topics Covered in CS2101

Strategic Needs Analysis	Q&A: Thinking on your feet	Tech portfolios
General Presentations	Team development / Team meetings	User guides /Developer guides
Product Demos & Pitches	Progress reports	Critical reflections

Adapted from Week 1 Slides

OP1 Presentations

Professional Resume and Cover Letter

Interview Skills

Building credibility at the workplace

Managing conflict and negotiation

Activity 2:

What are some key concepts or principles that you have gleaned from this module?

Activity 3:

*Evaluate your
recess week reflections*

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- e.g. your role, observations, reactions, emotions

- Who, what, why, when, where

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Now What?

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- Considers what you would do similarly or differently in future and why.

The What

So What

Now What

1. Were these three elements present in your recess week reflections?

The What

- Description of the incident/ experience

- e.g. your role, observations, reactions, emotions

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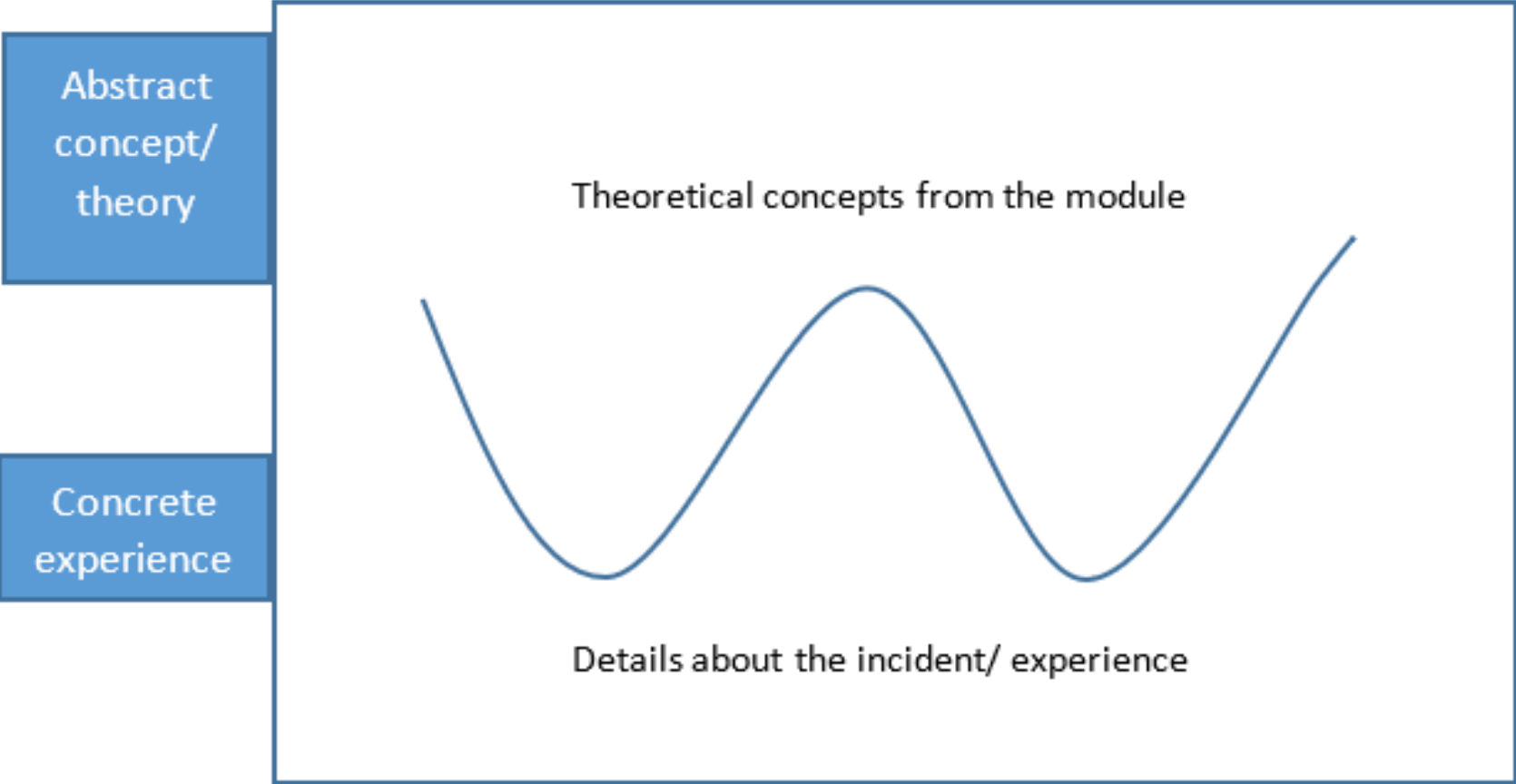2. Did you relate your experience to specific concepts found in CS2101?

Activity 4:

Revise your recess week reflections and share your critical reflections with a partner verbally.

Think about it:

How would you structure your critical reflections in writing?

Structure of an Essay	Details
Introduction	- Context/ Background - Thesis statement (Main Theme / learning point)
Body The What So What Now What	Consider your: - Past position - The moment of change and its significance - Your new position and implications on future behaviour/ actions *remember to relate it to course concepts*
Conclusion	- Summarise your main learning point - Include any final thoughts

Essay Structure
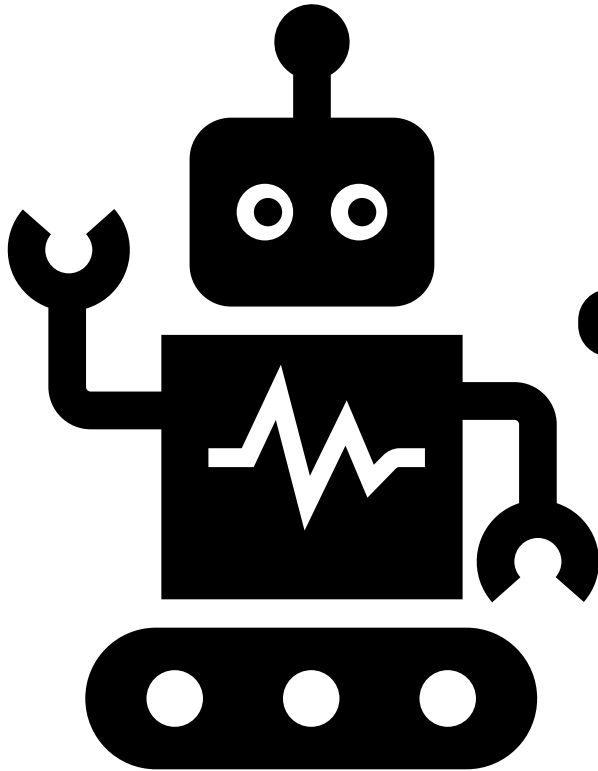
Introduction

Context / Background

Thesis statement

Body

For each paragraph:

- Topic Sentences
- Supporting sentences

Conclusion

Restate Thesis

Final Thoughts

Think about it:

How would you signpost?

Examples of Signposting

The What	
So What	Now What

- **Description/Explanation**: What happened
  - E.g. *We discussed/talked/met…*

- **Expression**: My feelings and thoughts about the experience
  - E.g. *The challenging/interesting/motivating part for me was…*
  - E.g. *I was frustrated/anxious/surprising/satisfied because…*

- **Assessment**: What I learned/got out of that experience
  - E.g. *I learned/realized that…*

- **Exploration**: *What I need to do in the future and how…*
  - E.g. *In a similar situation in future, I will…*

Adapted from http://students.kin.ubc.ca/events/kinesiology-transition-program/roadmap/writing-a-reflection/

Think about it:

What style would you use in your critical reflection?

Think about it:

What style would you use in your critical reflection?

Formal/ Academic Writing

Your final assignment

Please refer to the **Critical Reflection Info Pack** for more information.

Write a critical reflection based on your learning journey in CS2101 and CS2103T/CS2113T.

Describe one or two experiences that occurred this semester that led to an insightful realisation and subsequent change in the way you communicate or perceive communication.

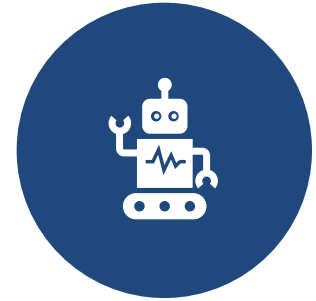Consider how this is significant for you and how you would do better in the future.

Evaluation (15%)

BREADTH AND DEPTH OF CONTENT 50%

LANGUAGE AND STYLE 30%

ORGANISATION 20%

Aspect	6 Exemplary	5 Accomplished	4 Proficient	3 Developing	2 Emerging	1 Unacceptable
Breadth of Content (20%)	• Provides clear, complete yet concise description of event (i.e. what) • Clearly and completely articulates transformation of perspective of themselves or an issue (i.e. so what) • Clearly and completely proposes thoughtful ways to improve or do better in future (i.e. now what)	• Provides clear description of event (i.e. what) • Clearly articulates change in perspective of themselves or an issue (i.e. so what) • Clearly proposes thoughtful ways to improve or do better in future (i.e. now what)	• Provides some description of event which may be unclear or incomplete at times (i.e. what) • Provides some explanation of a change in their perspective of themselves or an issue (i.e. so what) • Considers and proposes plausible ways to improve or do better in future (i.e. now what)	• Provides an unclear and/or incomplete description/narration of event (i.e. what) • Provides an unclear and/or incomplete explanation of a change in their perspective of themselves or an issue (i.e. so what) • Describes ways to improve or do better in future without much thought (i.e. now what)	• Provides a vague or superficial description of events (i.e. what) • Provides an unclear and incomplete explanation of a change in their perspective of themselves or an issue (i.e. so what) • Vaguely mentions ways to improve or do better in future (i.e. now what)	• Provides an irrelevant or unclear description of events (i.e. what) • Provides an irrelevant or vague explanation of a change in their perspective of themselves or an issue (i.e. so what) • Provide irrelevant ways or fails to provide ways to improve or do better in future (i.e. now what)
Depth of Content (30%)	• Demonstrates excellent perceptivity and critical thinking • Avoids oversimplifying and considers the full complexity of the issue • Evaluates communication concept(s) deeply and makes very insightful connections between the communication concept and their personal experiences	• Demonstrates perceptivity and critical thinking • Considers the complexities of the issue • Analyses communication concept(s) and makes insightful connections between the communication concept and their personal experiences	• Demonstrates some critical thinking • Considers some complexities of the issue • Applies communication concept(s) to make some connections between the communication concept and their personal experiences	• The occasional attempts at analysis are superficial • May oversimplify issues and overlook complexities • Explains communication concept(s) but the connections between the communication concept and their personal experiences are unclear or linked in a cursory manner	• There is little or no attempt at analysis • Oversimplifies issues and fails to articulate the complexities of the matter • There is little mention of communication concepts or links between the communication concept and their personal experiences	• There is no attempt at an analysis • There is no articulation of the issues and/or the complexities • There is no mention of communication concepts and/or links between the communication concept and their personal experiences

Language and Style (30%)	• The writing is extremely clear and concise • A wide range of sentence structures are employed (e.g. complex and simple structures) • Grammar and vocabulary are accurate, effective, and appropriate throughout • An academic / professional register is used	• The writing is clear and concise throughout • A good range of sentence structures are employed (e.g. complex and simple structures) • Grammar and vocabulary are generally accurate, effective, and appropriate but there may be one or two lapses • An academic / professional register is mostly used	• The writing is mostly clear and concise • Some variations of sentence structures are employed (e.g. complex and simple structures) • Grammar and vocabulary are mostly accurate, effective, and appropriate but there may be minor lapses in some places • An academic / professional register is mostly used but there may be lapses	• The writing is sometimes unclear • There may be variations in sentence structures, but complex sentences may be problematic • There are some grammatical errors which affect comprehension • There is a range of vocabulary used but there are some awkward, ambiguous and/or inappropriate phrases and words. • The style may appear casual in some sections	• The writing is often unclear • There may be variations in sentence structures, but complex sentences are problematic or there are little variations in sentence structures • There are often grammatical errors which affect comprehension • The vocabulary used is often awkward, ambiguous and/or inappropriate • The style often appears casual	• The writing is unclear • There are little variations in sentence structures • There are frequent grammatical errors which affect comprehension • The vocabulary used is awkward, ambiguous and/or inappropriate • The style is casual throughout
Organisation (20%)	Fulfils ALL the following well: • Writing is coherent and logically organised with an overall unity of ideas • There is always coherence between paragraphs and sentences • There is a discernible introduction, middle and conclusion, and there are clear topic sentences in body paragraphs • There is effective use of signposting and cohesive devices which enable ideas to flow smoothly	Fulfils ALL the following with 1 or 2 minor lapses: • Writing is coherent and logically organised with an overall unity of ideas. • There is coherence between paragraphs and sentences • There is a discernible introduction, middle and conclusion, and there are clear topic sentences in body paragraphs • There is effective use of signposting and cohesive devices which enable ideas to flow smoothly.	• Writing is mostly coherent and logically organised • There is mostly coherence between paragraphs and sentences • There is a discernible introduction, middle and conclusion, and there are clear topic sentences in body paragraphs • There is mostly effective use of signposting and cohesive devices which enable ideas to flow smoothly	• Writing is somewhat coherent and logically organised • There is somewhat coherence between paragraphs and sentences • There is a discernible introduction, middle and conclusion, and there are some clear topic sentences in body paragraphs • There is an attempt at signposting and the use of cohesive devices to enable ideas to flow smoothly	• Writing is mostly incoherent or illogical • There is often a lack of coherence between paragraphs or sentences • There is some sort of a structure, but gaps are evident; or there is a lack of paragraphing • There is insufficient signposting and use of cohesive devices that may cause confusion for the reader	• Writing is incoherent or illogical • There is a lack of coherence between paragraphs or sentences • There is a lack of paragraphing • There is a lack of signposting and use of cohesive devices that causes confusion for the reader

Other Resources

- The Learning Centre, University of New South Wales (2010). Reflective Writing. Retrieved from https://student.unsw.edu.au/reflective-writing
- University of Cumbria (n.d.). Rolfe et al.'s (2001) reflective model. Retrieved from http://my.cumbria.ac.uk/Public/LISS/Documents/skillsatcumbria/ReflectiveModelRolfe.pdf
- University of Reading (2016). Practice-based and reflective learning. Retrieved from http://libguides.reading.ac.uk/reflective/writing