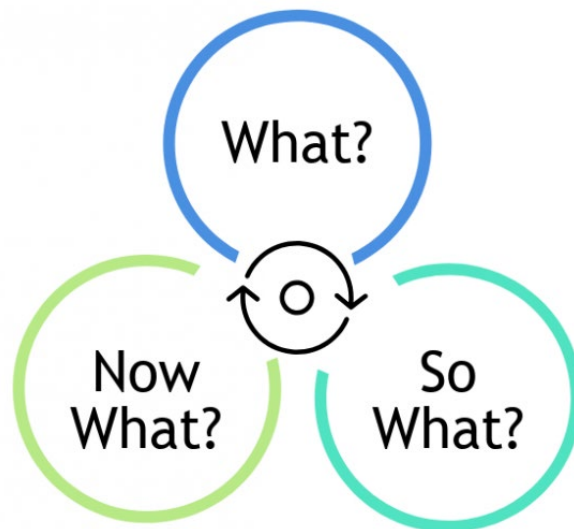


# Frameworks for Reflecting on Teaching

## What? So What? Now What?

One of the most straight-forward frameworks to support reflection is the *What? So What? Now What?* model (Borton, 1970):



**What?** Describe the nature of the experience, your role, observations and reactions.

*What happened? What did you do? What did you expect? What was different? What was your reaction? What did you learn?*

**So What?** Explain the significance or relevance of the experience and your interpretations.

*Why does it matter? What are the consequences and meanings of your experiences? How do your experiences relate to the course content? How do your experiences link to your academic, professional and/or personal development?*

**Now What?** Discuss what impact of this experience and your interpretations will have on future actions and thoughts.

*What are you going to do as a result of your experiences? What will you do differently? How will you apply what you have learned? How would you approach this experience next time?*

From: <https://brocku.ca/pedagogical-innovation/resources/experiential-education/role-of-reflection/#1552943059346-96b2c736-21ff>

# The 5R framework for reflection

From: <https://www.ed.ac.uk/reflection/reflectors-toolkit/reflecting-on-experience/5r-framework>; This article was published on 5 Nov, 2018.

The 5R framework for reflection will guide you through Reporting, Responding, Relating, Reasoning, and Reconstructing to make sense of a learning experience.

## Overview

This framework developed by Bain et al. (for example 2002), focuses on five core stages, each addressing one aspect of reflection. By thinking about all 5 stages individually you will engage with all the essential components of reflection, enabling you to produce a critically engaged reflection based in your experience. This model can also be helpful for structuring reflective writing.

The 5 stages are:

- **Reporting** of the context of the experience
- **Responding** to the experience (observations, feelings, thoughts, etc.)
- **Relating** the experience to knowledge and skills you already have
- **Reasoning** about the significant factors/theory to explain the experience
- **Reconstructing** your practice by planning future actions for a similar experience

Below is further information on the model – each stage is given a fuller description, tips about language use, guiding questions to ask yourself and an example of how this might look in a reflection.

This is just one model of reflection. Test it out and see how it works for you. If you find that only a few of the questions are helpful, focus on those. However, by thinking about each stage you are likely to engage more critically with your learning experience.

## The model



### The 5R framework for reflection

This model lends itself well to structuring both the thinking process and the write-up of a reflection. To get the full benefit of this model you will have to know the characteristics of each of the 5 R's. Being able to recognise the language that is relevant for each step will also benefit you if using the model for academic reflection.

The 'Reporting' and 'Responding' can sometimes interlink and be presented as one level. This highlights the fact that while there is a natural progression through the stages, when producing written reflections you might want write more freely without a clear boundary between the areas.

A number of helpful questions as well as key components are outlined below for each of the stages. You don't have to answer all of them, but they can guide you to what sort of things make sense to include in that stage. You might have others questions that work better for you.

## Reporting

Here you can present the context with little or no comment or interpretation of the experience.

What to do	What's included	Helpful questions
A brief description of the experience/problem or issue	The key elements of the situation that are essential for you to communicate the context to reader.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What happened?</li><li>• What are the key aspects of this situation?</li><li>• Who was involved?</li><li>• What did I do?</li></ul>

**Key language points:** You are reporting on an event that happened so use the past tense. Helpful phrases are 'I saw...', 'I noticed...', 'I/they said...', 'I had...' and words indicating time such as yesterday, last week, etc.

### Example of Reporting

Yesterday, I had a meeting with my supervisor to discuss my final project. I requested the meeting as I had a series of concerns about the next steps for my methods section of my report. During the meeting we got side-tracked, spending 30 minutes talking about my literature review, which did not leave us enough time to discuss what I needed. As a result, I left with no answers to my concerns.

## Responding

Here you can present your reaction or response to the situation. This can be thoughts, feelings, and observations.

What to do	What's included	Helpful questions
Provide your personal response to the situation.	Your feelings and thoughts about the experience, as well as any observations and potential questions you have.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How did what happened make me feel?</li><li>• What did I think?</li><li>• What made me think and feel this way?</li></ul>

**Key language points:** You are writing about thoughts and feelings that happened, so use the past tense. Helpful phrases are 'I felt...', 'I thought...', 'I believe...', 'I think...'. It can be useful to use transitional language to connect experiences with feelings and thoughts, for example 'next', 'subsequently', 'afterwards', 'finally', 'leading to' etc.

### Example of Responding

When I came out of the meeting I remember thinking that I had wasted our time, leading me to feel really frustrated. I think I felt that way because I was hesitant to say to my supervisor that the conversation on the literature review was not what I wanted to discuss. The reason I was hesitant is that my supervisor has so much more experience than me, so if they wanted to spend time on the literature review that was probably the right thing to do. However, given I believe we wasted our time I realised afterwards that it was probably not the right thing to do.

### Relating

Here you can relate your experience of the reported situation with your knowledge and skills from outside of the situation.

What to do	What's included	Helpful questions
Provide your understanding of how the situation relates to your own knowledge and past experiences.	Your connections between past experiences, your skills, knowledge, your understanding and the situation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have I seen this before?</li> <li>• What was similar/different then?</li> <li>• Do I have skills and knowledge to deal with this?</li> </ul>

**Key language points:** You are commenting on an experience from the past but in the present so you should consider writing in the present tense. Helpful phrases are 'This reminds me of...', 'This is like when...'. It can be useful to use comparative language as 'previously', 'similarly', 'unlike', etc.

### Example of Relating

I realise that similar things have happened before when I am in meetings with people who have more experience than I and I don't have a clear plan. This reminds me of my meeting at work, where I had a concern I wanted to raise with my boss but we never got around to it. I think the common factor in these situations is that I feel that people with more expertise than I always make better decisions than I do.

## Reasoning

Here you can make sense of the situation in terms of significant factors and, if relevant (for example if requested in assessments), the theoretical literature relevant to your experience.

What to do	What's included	Helpful questions
Explore and explain the situation or experience.	Significant factors within the situation and how they are important to understanding what happened.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What is the most important aspect of this situation and why?</li><li>• Is there any theoretical literature that can help me make sense of the situation?</li><li>• How do different perspectives (for example personal, as a student or professional) affect the way I understand the situation?</li><li>• How would someone who is knowledgeable about these types of situations respond?</li></ul>

**Key language points:** These are your current thoughts so write in the present tense. Helpful phrases are 'I understand that...', 'I realise', 'For me the most significant aspect...'. It can be useful to use analytical language as 'critically', 'imply', 'support' (as in supporting evidence), etc.

### Example of reasoning

The most significant thing about the meeting situation is what happens when I am going in with a vague plan of what I want. I have realised that I do not get the things I need from the meeting. This is especially problematic when the person I am meeting with has more experience than me. My previous experience with my boss would support this idea. I think if I address them like peers and not superiors, I can be differently prepared. I imagine that if I was an expert at leading meetings I would have a clear plan, which I would state at the beginning of the meeting so that we both know what we need to discuss. I think what has been holding me back is being afraid of looking bossy. However, if I look at it from their perspective and see that I am actually saving them time by only meeting once, I would actually be coming across as professional rather than bossy.

## Reconstructing

Here you make a conclusion about your future plans based on the previous four sections.

What to do	What's included	Helpful questions
Reframe or reconstruct future practice by drawing conclusions from the four previous stages.  Use this to develop an action plan for what to do next.	Your deeper understanding and summary of the learning.  You will also have to include an action plan, arguing for why it will work.  That can be based on literature included in the previous stage or from the new knowledge gained from the Relating and Reasoning stages.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How would I need to do this differently in the future?</li><li>• What might work and why?</li><li>• Are there different options?</li><li>• Are my ideas supported by theory?</li><li>• Can I make changes to benefit others?</li><li>• What might happen if...?</li></ul>

**Key language points:** These are your current thoughts about what you want to do in the future so use the present or future tense. Helpful phrases are 'I will now...', 'I realise', 'I have learned that...', 'As a next step, I need to...'. It can be useful to use words indicating future as 'will', 'may', 'could', etc.

### Example of reconstructing

Based on the previous reflection stages, I have learned that I need to write an agenda before going into a meeting. I realise by taking 10 minutes before a meeting to prepare what I need

from it, I can save time for both myself and the person I am meeting with. Firstly in the meeting, I will share the agenda so the objectives are clear from the start to enable the outcome I want.

Alternatively, I could email the person beforehand telling them what I need from the meeting so they can prepare. I think the latter will work at university, but maybe not at my work where there is no email culture. I think if I do this, my meetings will be shorter and I can get what I need from them.

### Adapted from:

Bain, J.D., Ballantyne, R., Mills, C. & Lester, N.C. (2002). Reflecting on practice: Student teachers' perspectives, Post Pressed: Flaxton, Qld