

wbs
WARWICK BUSINESS SCHOOL
THE UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

**For the
Change
Makers**



**The Art of Reflection:
Looking back to look
forward**

What is 'reflection'?

- “Active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in light of the grounds that support it and the further conclusion to which it tends” (Dewey 1933, p118).
- Rogers (2002) deconstructs reflection into four characteristics:
 - A dynamic process that facilitates meaning-making by encouraging the learner to make connections and understand relationships between knowledge and experiences
 - It is systematic, disciplined and rigorous
 - It is socially constructed
 - It requires the learner to value their personal and academic growth and that of others
- There are two types of reflection, both encourage students to relate experience to theory (Schön 1983):
 - Reflection in action – reflection occurs during an event
 - Reflection on action – reflection occurs after the event

What is the value of 'reflection'? (Ono and Ichii 2019)

Reflection...

- Facilitates critical thinking
- Helps move students from surface to deep learning
- Helps students develop confidence and cognitive ability
- As an assessment choice, it signposts critical reflection as an important skill (Boud and Falchikov 2007).



Three examples of 'reflection' in assessment

	Dr Leela Cejnar	Dr Jenny Lloyd	Dr Melanie Aley
Subject Area	Law	Marketing	Oral health
Level	BSc	MSc	Bachelors
Module/Course	Fundamentals of Business Law and Law for Entrepreneurs	Critical Issues in Marketing	Foundations of Oral Health 1
Assignment Type	Letters to Successors	Reflective portfolio	Letters to Successors
Assessment Task	Students wrote letters to the next cohort about (1) why they selected this module; (2) what they learned? (3) how they might use their learning?	As part of their weekly async task, students were required to undertake weekly reflection about what they had learned and how it might apply to specific 'real life' situations.	Students wrote letters to the next cohort reflecting on their first semester experience. Prompts: I wish I had known at the start of my first year..... The biggest challenge I overcame in my first semester was..... I wish someone had told me....
Assignment weighting	Non-assessable/voluntary	10%	10%

Our reflections on what worked...

Dr Leela Cejnar	Dr Jenny Lloyd	Dr Melanie Aley
Students were from different disciplinary backgrounds and noted that learning law made them approach how they learn and "do" in ways they had not previously considered	Students who engaged were generally better prepared for workshop activities.	Weighting the reflection as an assessment ensured student engaged with the activity (previously was unweighted).
Learning terminology and the "language of law": a different "epistemic culture"	Linking the exercise to real work contexts was well received as students could see their relevance.	Using Gibbs reflective cycle as a framework helped students to meaningfully reflect for the first time.
Learning to consider different perspectives and analyse each detail	Students who engaged generally achieved better overall assessment outcomes.	Four themes emerged: the emotional journey, challenges faced, strategies for success and personal transformation.
Applying "logical" reasoning to solve problems and developing to think critically	Students liked the progressive development of their reflective skills over the course of the module	Students gained new skills, traits and perspectives which afforded them personal growth.

...and what didn't

Dr Leela Cejnar	Dr Jenny Lloyd	Dr Melanie Aley
Students from backgrounds such as Mathematics and Finance developed the ability to “use words”, the written and the spoken	Reflection is not something taught on many UG courses. It was an unfamiliar concept and had to be discussed at length and supported more extensively than conventional assessment types.	Gibbs framework may be too complex for first year students.
Students initially felt uncomfortable that learning and answers were not “black and white”	Students felt uncomfortable with the idea that there wasn't a ‘right answer’.	Students were initially uncomfortable with writing in the first person for an assessment task.
How can learning law VALUE ADD to students' disciplinary expertise and knowledge?	Colleagues felt objective appraisal to be challenging. Focused upon quantity rather than quality of reflections undertaken	Faculty identified the need for a consistent reflection framework throughout the program.
How can learning law better prepare students for their futures (of work)/lifelong learning?	Level of student engagement was variable. Some students clearly used AI simply to generate a response.	Students faced many challenges, and there is scope for our curriculum to provide additional support focusing on diversity, inclusion and resilience.

Our reflections for anyone contemplating the use of 'reflection' as a form of assessment

- 'Reflection' has the potential to have real value as a tool to facilitate deeper learning.
- The purpose and value of reflection has to be articulated clearly to students so that they see it as a task that has intrinsic and extrinsic value.
- Reflection is not something that is routinely taught in schools or at UG. Students and academic colleagues have to be supported in the skill of reflection and how to assess it.

References

- Boud, D. and Falchikov, N., 2007. *Rethinking assessment in higher education* (pp. 191-207). London: Routledge.
- Dewey, J., 1933. How we think: A restatement of the relation of reflective thinking to the educative process Vol. 8.
- Knorr Cetina, 1999. *Epistemic Cultures: How the sciences make knowledge*. Harvard University Press.
- Ono, A. and Ichii, R., 2019. Business students' reflection on reflective writing assessments. *Journal of International Education in Business*, 12(2), pp.247-260.
- Rodgers, C., 2002. Defining reflection: Another look at John Dewey and reflective thinking. *Teachers college record*, 104(4), pp.842-866.
- Schon, D.A., 1983. 1983, The reflective practitioner: How professionals think in action. New York: Basic Books.