

Reflective Thinking

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Slide 1: Reflective Thinking

Gain insight into your experiences

University of Toronto logo
Closed captioning button.

Slide Help

This module will take approximately 15 minutes to complete.

Resources: To download additional documents and an annotated bibliography, go to the resources tab on the top left of your screen under the module title.

Transcripts for videos are available under Resources tab.

Print: Print tab, above on the right to print or save everything that appears on the screen.

Exit: Use Exit tab to close the module. Exit tab is located above to the right of Print tab. You may exit the module at anytime. When you return to the module you may be prompted to resume the module. The resume prompt depends on whether you cleared your browser history. Clearing the browser history will restart the module from the beginning.

Slide 2

Your experiences help form the person you are. What you learn from them can help you make future decisions.

Slide 3

Reflective thinking starts with recalling an experience or event that stands out for you. It could be from any area of your life, it could be a big life event or a smaller one. Think about why it stands out and what it meant for you. We'll come back to this experience during this module.

Slide 4: What You Will Learn

Here's what you can expect/should be able to take away from this module:

- Benefits: Learn the process of reflection and how it can benefit your learning and growth
- Tools: How to reflect on an experience and connect this to your life (future decisions, challenges, goals, aspirations)

Slide 5

Let's start with hearing from a student about how reflective thinking helped them learn and grow.

Slide 6

(Video transcript)

It was a really good way of looking at the goals I'd set in September and the things that I felt that I'd accomplished by April. And comparing the two and realizing that I had gotten it better things, gotten better at things like time management or I had gotten better at things like social skills. And then also just putting aside a different list of things that I'd wanted to improve on.

Slide 7

In this video, the individual was able to:

- Compare goal setting and accomplishments from the start to the end
- Recognize the development of time management and social skills
- Explore improvements for the future involvement

Now that you have heard a student reflecting on their experience, it's time to learn more about the benefits of reflective thinking.

Slide 8: Discovering benefits

Below are four students. Each one has a story to share. When you are reading the student's story think about how the person benefited from the experience? Click on a student to select their story.

Work Experience (image: White female student wearing white hijab and glasses)

University Class (image: Black (female) student wearing blue shirt with long curly brown hair)

Interest/hobby (image: White (male) student waving, wearing grey shirt with short brown hair and beard)

Not living at home (image: Student of colour with straight shoulder length brown hair and grey shirt peeking around a door)

Slide 9 – Work Experience

(slide set up to resemble a text message between two friends.)

Friend: Hey! How was your summer working at Habitat for Humanity?

Work Experience person: I loved it!

Friend: Really!?

Work Experience person: Yeah! Looking back, I was lucky to work with so many nice people who helped me learn how to adjust to a new role, and I realized every small task was helping make an impact! It was nice to see how much a community can connect to help so many people!

Go back to stories.

Continue to questions.

Slide 9 – University class

(slide set up to resemble a text message between two friends.)

University class person: I honestly didn't find that group assignment too bad, and we got an A+!

University class person: Our group decided to divide tasks based on what people were already good at- and so everyone was excited to present their part and were able to answer questions better.

Friend: I am glad! I know you were stressing about it but it is good your team was able to take that approach!

Go back to stories.

Continue to questions.

Slide 9 – Interest/hobby

(slide set up to resemble a text message between two friends.)

Friend: How did you read a full book EVERY MONTH??

Interest/hobby person: honestly, I just turned on a stopwatch for 30 minutes every day to read when I would normally take a break to watch tv or go on my phone.

Friend: I don't know if I could do it.

Interest/hobby person: It helped to choose books that were interesting or let me disconnect from schoolwork, and it was only 30 minutes, so it wasn't too much to read in my day!

Friend: Okay, I am going to try it!

Go back to stories.

Continue to questions.

Slide 9 – Not Living at home

(slide set up to resemble a text message between two friends.)

Not Living at home person: My best friend and I have been writing letters to each other because I miss my friends and family back home! It helps to have something to look forward to and to share deeper stories than what we post online.

Friend: Oh that's cool! How do you find the time?

Not Living at home person: Honestly, I just do it every Sunday morning and I realize the little effort goes a long way as I love getting the letters and sending them knowing they will be just as excited to get mine.

Friend: That's so nice!

Go back to stories.

Continue to questions.

Slide 10: What was gained from the experience?

Now that you have read the experience, select two benefits from the experiences that stood out for you.

Time management

Staying Connected

Getting good grades

Relying on peers for help

Setting goals

Finding new friends

Team Work

Value of Community

Submit button.

Slide 11: Benefits of reflective thinking

You were asked to select two benefits, you selected (can't be calculated in the PDF format)

Depending on the experience there are many benefits gained from thinking about it. Your selected benefits are indicated by 'selected'.

Time management

Staying Connected

Getting good grades

Relying on peers for help

Setting goals

Finding new friends
Team Work
Value of Community

Curious about the stories you did not select? Read the other stories button.

Slide 12

From the student stories you can see how the individual, who was reflecting by talking to a friend, was able to discover what skills they gained from their experience. You can see how that short exchange helped in the reflective thinking process.

Now we will look at a tool to help you explore how you can reflect on your experiences.

Slide 13: How to think about your experience

Now that you know what can be gained from thinking about an experience, it might help to learn about a approach—What, So What, Now What?

Slide 14: What, So What, Now What Tool

(Video transcript)

Using the "What, So What, Now What" framework for reflective thinking can help you review an experience and discover the value it holds for you. Start with What - where you describe the situation, including who was involved, what your actions were. Then think about So What - how did your actions influence the situation. what was the result. Finally, you want to dig a little deeper and think about how your example might help you gain insight for the future. That is the Now What -what did you learn from this, what skills did you gain, what did it confirm about your goals/what surprised you, what would you do differently or the same, and what decisions does this influence for the future.

Slide 15: Look how we used the tool

Let's take a look at the student stories from earlier and how they reflected on this new experience and how it will benefit their future goals.

Select the character to read how they applied the What, So What, Now What tool to their situation.

Work Experience
University Class
Interest/hobby
Not living at home

Slide 16 – Work Experience What, So What, Now What tool applied

This student thought about their work experience.

What: Working at Habitat for Humanity, worked with nice people who helped me learn how to adjust to a new role.

So What: (*hint how did your actions influence the situation, what was the result*)
Working with others to see that even small tasks can have an impact

Now What: (*hint: what did you learn from this, what skills did you gain, what did it confirm about your/what surprised you, what would you do differently or the same*)

I will be looking to both work and volunteer as I enjoy finding ways to help my communities!

Continue to practice using tool.

Slide 16 – Interest/hobby What, So What, Now What tool applied

This student thought about their hobby/interest.

What: used stopwatch to read 30 minutes each day

So what: (*hint - how did your actions influence the situation, what was the result*)
managed my time better to be able to read more

Now what: (*hint: what did you learn from this, what skills did you gain, what did it confirm about your/what surprised you, what would you do differently or the same*)

I will continue to read and also go for a walk each day for just 30 minutes so I can reach other goals of being healthy even during busy times of the year!

Continue to practice using tool.

Slide 16 – University class What, So What, Now What tool applied

This student thought about an experience in a university class.

What: group decided to divide tasks based on what people were already good at.

So what: (*hint- how did your actions influence the situation, what was the result*)
the group realized instead of doing things separately- it was easier for each person to do the parts they enjoyed and then together our project was better

Now what: (*hint - what did you learn from this, what skills did you gain, what did it confirm about your/what surprised you, what would you do differently or the same*)

I am excited for group activities because I can bring skills I have and can count on others to bring different skills they have to reach bigger goals, together

Continue to practice using tool.

Slide 16 – Not living at home What, So What, Now What tool applied

This student thought about a life experience.

What: writing letters to each other because I miss my friends and family back home

So what: (*hint - how did your actions influence the situation, what was the result*):
I was able to stay connected with people who are important to me by planning ahead and sticking to a routine

Now What: (*hint: what did you learn from this, what skills did you gain, what did it confirm about your/what surprised you, what would you do differently or the same*)

Even when I am busy, I know how important staying connected is to my well- being so I will always make it a part of my schedule

Continue to practice using tool.

Slide 17: Your turn to use the What, So What, Now What tool

Notice your experience has been added under 'What'. Using the information gained from the video and the examples write your So What and Now What statements. Need assistance? Click the information icons.

What

So What: *(hint how did your actions influence the situation, what was the result)*

Now What: *(hint what did you learn from this, what skills did you gain, what did it confirm about your/what ently or the same)*

Back to view the other examples button.

Slide 18

Did you notice from the students' stories that many people start to reflect on events in their life all the time just by talking with a friend?

We hope introducing the 'What, So What and Now What' tool will be helpful to your reflective thinking process so that you may benefit from the insights gained

Slide 19: Applying your insights

Now that you have applied the "What, So What and Now What" tool to an event in your past. Looking ahead, describe other areas of your life where you could use the reflective thinking tool.

Type your thoughts in this box.

Slide 20: Summary

Initially we asked you about an event or experience that stood out for you.
Your response –

Then you worked through activities of identifying benefits and used a tool to reflect on your experience. Below are your comments about how the insight gained through reflective thinking could be applied to a future decision.

Keep a copy of your thoughts. Take a screenshot or save as a pdf

Slide 22: Thank you for completing the module.