Reflective Learning - ePortfolio: Reflections on Program Outcomes

 

**Upper Iowa University RN-BSN Program**

**2019**


##### **Reflective Learning**

**What is a Reflective Learning?**

Reflective learning is designed to help you think deeply about your learning, especially on issues such as: your progress in learning, the difficulties you encountered in the process of learning, the strategies you have taken to get around those difficulties, and your evaluation of your own performance.

**What is reflective writing?**

**Reflective writing is:**

* your response to experiences, opinions, events or new information
* your response to thoughts and feelings
* a way of thinking to explore your learning
* an opportunity to gain self-knowledge
* a way to achieve clarity and better understanding of what you are learning
* a chance to develop and reinforce writing skills
* a way of making meaning out of what you study

**Reflective writing is not:**

* just conveying information, instruction or argument
* pure description, though there may be descriptive elements
* straightforward decision or judgement (e.g. about whether something is right or wrong, good or bad)
* simple problem-solving
* a summary of course notes
* a standard university essay

**What can you get from writing an ePortfolio reflection?**

Writing a reflection helps you:

* bring together theory and practice,
* yield better understanding of the course material

For your development as a successful and independent learner, it helps you:

* See your strength and weakness as a learner
* Find out the methods of learning which suit your own learning style
* Notice how you can improve your learning in the future
* Gain a clearer picture of your learning progress and so in a better position to plan your learning

## General Instructions

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| **What learning experience to reflect on?** |
| *The purpose of reflection is to examine what you learned from the signature assignment, how that assignment relates to a program outcome(s), and apply the knowledge gained to your nursing work or clinical experiences to demonstrate personal and professional growth.*  |
| **Frequency**  |
| *You are required to write your reflection during the week the signature assignment is due.*  |
| Pattern of feedback |
| *Feedback will be provided by your faculty advisor based on the purpose stated above.* |
| Assessment |
| *The faculty advisor will assess your reflection of the signature assignments and their relation to the application of knowledge learned and demonstrated personal and professional growth.* |

**Detail Guidelines**

This section offers guidelines for the expectations of your ePortfolio reflections that are reflective and significant to you personally.

**What learning experience to reflect on?**

Reflect on what you learned from the signature assignment, how that assignment relates to a program outcome(s), and apply the knowledge gained to your nursing work or clinical experiences to demonstrate personal and professional growth.

**Prompt questions for your reference:**

The function of these prompt questions is to stimulate your reflective thinking. You don’t need to (in fact, you are not supposed to) answer every one of them in any entry. Use these prompts:

* How what I have learned relates to my other experiences?
* What implications does it have regarding my learning?
* What difficulties have I encountered in applying my knowledge in dealing with work or clinical situations?
* What would be the causes for those difficulties and how could I overcome them?
* What do I find difficult in understanding? Why?

**To answer the following questions (3-4 paragraphs minimum):**

* How did this assignment meet the learning outcome?
* Include specific strategies for application of the knowledge gained to your current nursing practice or clinical experiences.
* Think about work or clinical situations that you have been involved in during this program. Reflect on how you acted differently or will act differently in the future because of what you learned?
* As you review your experiences, reflect on what stands out to you as significant examples of your learning in the areas of critical thinking, application to practice, and personal and professional growth.

**Sample entry**

Here is a sample entry to an ePortfolio reflection on a program outcome:

Goal 3: Manage technology and resources to communicate, support and provide quality care across the health care continuum. - Outcome 2: Utilize technology to access information that supports decision making.

his week’s signature assignment was a completion of the literature review matrix. This was not an easy assignment. In order to complete the assignment I had to use technology to find studies related to my topic of interest: essential oils and pain control and my searchable question: In patients with fibromyalgia, does using essential oils as an adjuvant to decrease pain to a level of 5 or less on a scale of 1-10 during the next 3 months?

I do not have a lot of experience searching for research studies. In fact I was scared to death! I started to doubt myself, what am I doing? What was I thinking going back to school? Then I took a deep breath and looked over the material from the previous weeks and remembered the announcement the professor posted in week 2 about the UIU library assistance.

So I worked with a librarian and he helped me get started. I used the UIU library digital resources (EBSCHost and Gale databases) to find the studies I needed to complete the assignment. After several hours, I was figuring out what key words to use and not use and referred back to the document from week 1 that discussed the major parts of a research study to help me be more efficient in my search.

The reason I chose this topic of interest is due to the fact that I am a home health nurse and see patients who have either a primary or secondary diagnosis of fibromyalgia. These patient’s pain level is usually a 6 or greater on a scale of 1-10. Although they are taking pain medications these are not enough to decrease their pain even by 1 to 2 points. I decided to look for research on the use of essential oils as an adjuvant to pain medications because I have taken care of patients who have used essential oils and have commented that the oils have helped decrease their pain to more of a manageable tolerance. I have been having a conversation with my home health nurse director about researching the literature and making a proposal to our medical director and other disciplines on the team to try essential oils in addition to standard pain medication. She stated if I can find enough literature supporting the use of essential oils she will help me to write the proposal! Six months ago I barely knew where to even start looking for research let alone what a research study even looked like. I am proud of what I have been able to accomplish in these four weeks.

**Quick Helps for Eportfolio REFLECTIONs**

# **What to write in the ePortfolio Reflection on a Program Outcome?**

ePortfolio reflection writing is very different from other academic assignments that you have been writing. It is a piece of flexible, personal, informal piece of writing. If you are unsure about how to start, and how to write, don’t just scribble something, as writing something truly “reflective” is the most important part of the process, see if our tips can give you a lift!

 “I don’t know what to write!”

**3 tips on what to write in a reflection:**

* Start off with whatever is in your mind about your learning experience from the week’s assignment.
* Describe the meaning of what you have learned from the week’s assignment. Also, your reaction, feeling, opinions, views on both the learning process and the learnt material
* Write down advice for yourself and make a plan for your learning in the near future

 “Now I know what to write in my reflection, but how should I write it?”

**5 tips on how to write a reflection:**

* Write in first person, as if you are writing a letter to a friend
* There is **no** right or wrong answer for a journal entry. Therefore, feel free to express your ideas, opinion, and thoughts
* Don’t hesitate to share your personal experience if that helps to illustrate your point
* Don’t limit yourself to words – diagrams and pictures are ok too
* Don’t be too intimidated by English rules. It’s okay to make minor grammatical mistakes if that does not interfere the transmission of ideas. So don’t put too much thought into how to write good English, instead spend more effort on what to write