

A reflection paper is...

- Your identification of the main themes of the readings integrated with your classroom experience and how both affect your thinking and practice.
- Your chance to add your thoughts and analysis to what you have read and experienced.
- Meant to illustrate your understanding of the material and how it affects your current ideas and potential future practice.



A reflection paper is *NOT*...

- A rote repetition of the course readings, a "My Journey" diary, or a structure-free stream-of-consciousness essay.

Organizing it

- Jot down some notes on the reading material and class experiences that stand out in your mind. Decide why they resonate for you.
- You might use the Restorative Questions to explore your thoughts and feelings about the course experience.
- Use the first person singular ("I") to relate the readings and classes to your prior knowledge and experience.
- Consider if, and how, the things you have read and learned changed your thinking, and how they might affect your practice in both personal and professional settings.
- Review the readings and class notes to be sure you've included all possible relevant information and made all the connections you can.

Writing it

- Give your reflection paper structure with an opening paragraph, main body and conclusion.
- It may be helpful to write the body of the paper first, using the suggestions previously listed, and then decide what your **opening paragraph** should say. Your opener can be brief (only a sentence or two), but should offer an overall picture of your perspective based on what you've learned (*Before I read the articles for this leadership course, I had never considered that I was an authoritative supervisor; that is, someone who gives my staff firm direction, but little support.*).
- In the **body**, you can then go on to describe which readings or class experiences affected your thinking, and why; you may disagree with some of them.
- The **conclusion** of your reflection can also be brief (*I realize that I must learn how to be more supportive to get the best from my staff.*). It is possible that your concluding statement may be uncertain (*I don't agree with everything I read, but I will consider using some of the practices in future to see if they change my office environment.*).
- Include in-text citations and a reference page, using APA style, for any sources that you cite. (See the IIRP APA Writing Guide for details.)

