ACE Quick Guide to Reflective Models

Why Should I Use a Reflective Model?

When tasked with a reflective assignment, it can be difficult to know what to do or where to begin. The **models below** may therefore be **used as both a starting point and a template for the process of reflection**. If applied successfully, reflective models will prompt you to **engage critically** with your experiences in the workplace, **examining your assumptions, motives and behaviours** – their potential strengths and limitations in practice.

Which Reflective Model Should I Choose?

There are many different models to choose from and although they differ in approach, they include comparable stages; the **key differences between them are the number and complexity of these stages** (Cambridge University, 2021).

If your assignment brief does not stipulate which should be employed, **clearly and succinctly explain your choice** of reflective model. No matter which model you choose, your arguments must be supported by relevant **scholarly theories**.

Model 1: Driscoll's 'What? So What? Now What?' Model
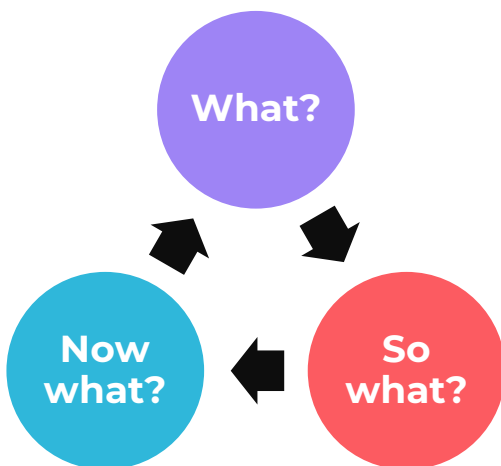
1. What?

In Driscoll's three-stage model, the 'What?' is a challenging or significant experience in the workplace.

Here, you should briefly describe the incident you are reflecting on:

- What happened
- What exactly did you do?
- What did the other parties involved do?

2. So what?

During the 'So what?' stage, critically analyse the significance of your experience:

- Why was this important?
- How do you feel about this?
- What did you learn about yourself?
- How can you employ scholarly theory to make sense of this?

3. Now what?

The 'Now what?' stage is where we look forward – considering alternative actions and strategies, the necessary steps to make them happen, and their possible consequences:

- How has this experience influenced your thinking and / or behaviour?
- What will you do in a similar situation in the future?
- How could you achieve a better outcome next time?
- What could you do to prepare yourself for this?

Advantages and Disadvantages of Driscoll's Model

Advantages	Disadvantages
• Straightforward to use. • The stages are easily remembered, titled after a prompting question.	• The simplistic title questions **do not necessarily encourage you to reflect critically** on your own assumptions, behaviours, and motives • Models such as Gibbs' include **additional stages** devoted to feelings, evaluation and analysis. • The (false) **implication that all stages require equal treatment** in writing

Model 2: Gibbs' Reflective Cycle
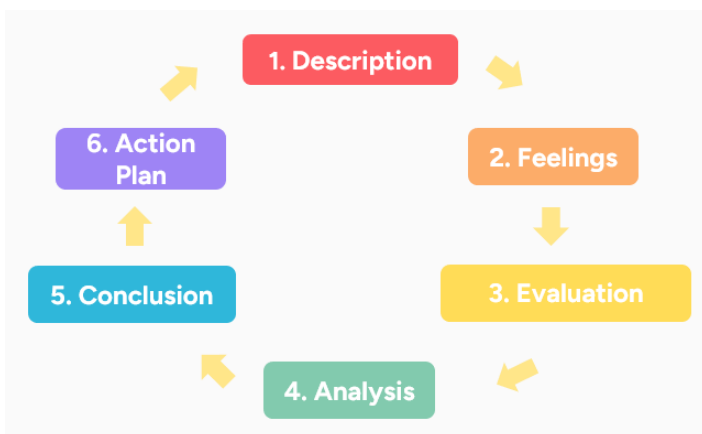
1. Description

In Gibbs' Reflective Cycle, the first stage is description. Here, you should clearly and succinctly address:

- What happened?
- What did you do?
- What did other people do?
- What did you want to happen?
- What was the outcome?

2. Feelings

Next, explore the feelings or thoughts you experienced regarding the incident:

- What were you feeling before, during, and after the situation?
- How were / are others feeling about the situation?
- What were you thinking during the situation?

3. Evaluation

Evaluate what did and did not work, being as objective as possible:

- What was good and bad about the experience?
- What went well? What did not go well?
- How did you and / or others contribute towards the situation?

4. Analysis

Here, you should critically analyse the significance of your experience:

- Why did / did not the situation go well?
- What sense can I make of it?
- How can scholarly theory help me understand this situation?

5. Conclusion

This is where you should summarise your learning, highlighting what changes to your actions might have improved the outcome:

- What did I learn from this? What else, for example, could I have done?
- How could this have been a more positive experience for those involved?
- What skills do I need to develop to achieve a better outcome next time?

6. Action Plan

Finally, plan for what you would do differently in a similar or related situation in the future:

- How will I develop the skills I require to succeed in the future?
- If the incident occurred again, what would I do differently?

(Adapted from The University of Edinburgh, 2023)

Advantages and Disadvantages of Gibb's Reflective Cycle

Advantages	Disadvantages
- Six clear stages, including one dedicated to 'Feelings' – useful for experiences with a strong interpersonal dimension. - Encourages consideration of positive and negative aspects of the situation.	- **Less user-friendly** than Driscoll's model. - The (false) **implication that all stages require equal treatment** in writing.

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Reference List

Cambridge University (2021) *Models of Reflection*. Available at: https://libguides.cam.ac.uk/reflectivepracticetoolkit/models (Accessed: 5 December 2024)

NursingAnswers (2018) *Driscoll's Model of Reflection*. Available at: https://nursinganswers.net/reflective-guides/driscoll-model-of-reflection.php (Accessed: 5 December 2024).

University of Edinburgh (2023) *Gibbs' Reflective Cycle*. Available at: https://www.ed.ac.uk/reflection/reflectors-toolkit/reflecting-on-experience/gibbs-reflective-cycle (Accessed: 5 December 2024).

Additional Resources

The University of Hull's guide to reflective frameworks details additional models by Kolb, Schön, Rolfe, and Brookfield.

The ACE Quick Guide to Advanced Reflective Analysis provides advice on how to reflect critically through presenting counterarguments and analysing strengths and limitations of theory and practice.

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