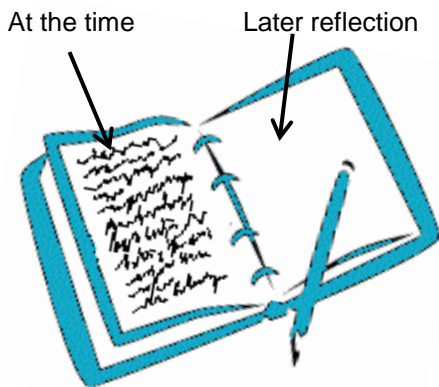


Keeping a reflective journal

A reflective journal is useful for understanding and learning from a longer experience such as a course, a placement or time abroad. It lets you chart your development step by step and also look back across the whole period.

It will provide a lot of useful material, supporting evidence and examples if you need to write a report about what you have learned from your experience.

To get most benefit from reflection, it's helpful to distance ourselves from our immediate impressions and try to be objective. One way to do this is to keep a 'split' journal where you record what is going on shortly after it happens and then return to reflect and comment on it a little while later.



Focus on the purpose of your reflection, for example:

- To see how your skills /knowledge are developing
- To make sense of something new
- To analyse an incident or event

Explore both the positive and the negative

Use your reflection to target ways for you to move forward

At the time

- Write a description as you see things now
- Include your feelings
- Note down anything you might want to refer to as 'evidence'
- If they occur to you, write down questions or things you might want to explore later

Later reflection

Look back objectively

- Compare what you think now with what you wrote then:
 - Ask yourself probing questions eg
 - How? Why? What if?
 - What does this say about me?
 - What have I learned?
 - How should I move forward?
- Use this thinking to write your reflective analysis