



THE UNIVERSITY  
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# The Reflective Portfolio: a rough guide



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# Overview

Why a 'reflective' assignment

Your questions

What we are looking for

Time to think about how *you* will approach it

Why a 'reflective'  
assignment?

# CPD for a wizard?



*Harry stared at the stone basin. The contents had returned to their original, silvery white state, swirling and rippling beneath his gaze.*

*“What is it?” Harry asked shakily.*

*“This? It is called a Pensieve,” said Dumbledore. “I sometimes find, and I am sure you know the feeling, that I simply have too many thoughts and memories crammed into my mind.”*

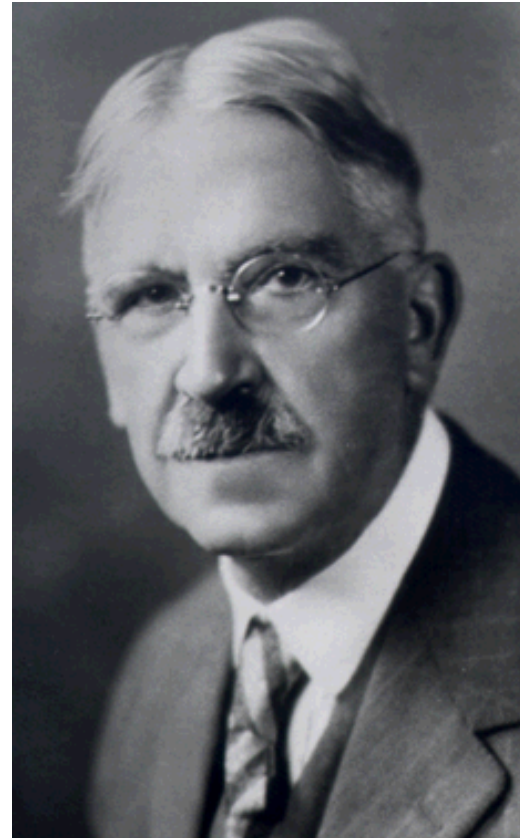
*“Err,” said Harry who couldn’t truthfully say that he had ever felt anything of the sort.*

*“At these times” said Dumbledore, indicating the stone basin, “I use the Pensieve. One simply siphons the excess thoughts from one’s mind, pours them into a basin, and examines them at one’s leisure. It becomes easier to spot patterns and links, you understand, when they are in this form.”*

# Reflection promotes learning

“We do not learn  
from experience ...  
we learn from  
**reflecting on  
experience**”

John Dewey 1859 - 1952



# Reflective writing

The **act of writing** itself will shape the content of your reflection



# What questions do you have?

- In threes: 5 minutes
  - Find out what questions you all have about the Reflective Portfolio Assignment.
  - I will pool all your questions and try to answer them by the end of the session.



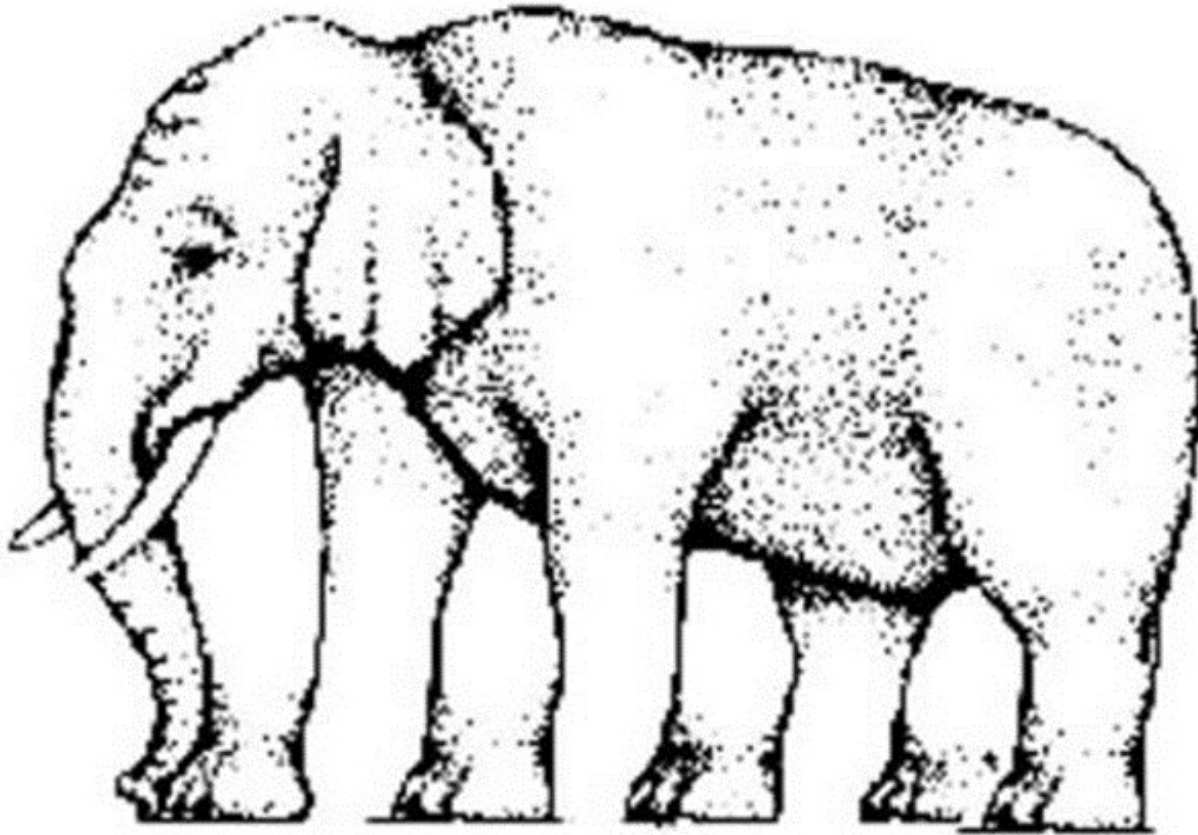
So what are we really  
looking for?

# Critical thinking

Show that you are thinking deeply and openly about **how** you teach and **why** you think you teach as you do

**Tip:** be curious, and honest, about your practice; go 'assumption hunting'

# We all make assumptions



How many legs does this elephant have?

# Example

*“I began to think about the amount of material that I covered in my tutorials and how I usually had to rush to get through everything. I knew that I had always felt the need to include a lot of detail in my sessions and I wondered why this might be the case. I realised that it might be because I wanted to ‘deliver a perfect product’ as much as I wanted to enhance my trainees’ learning. Underlying this was probably my assumption that trainees would want to take away a detailed set of notes, which is what I had wanted as a trainee...”*

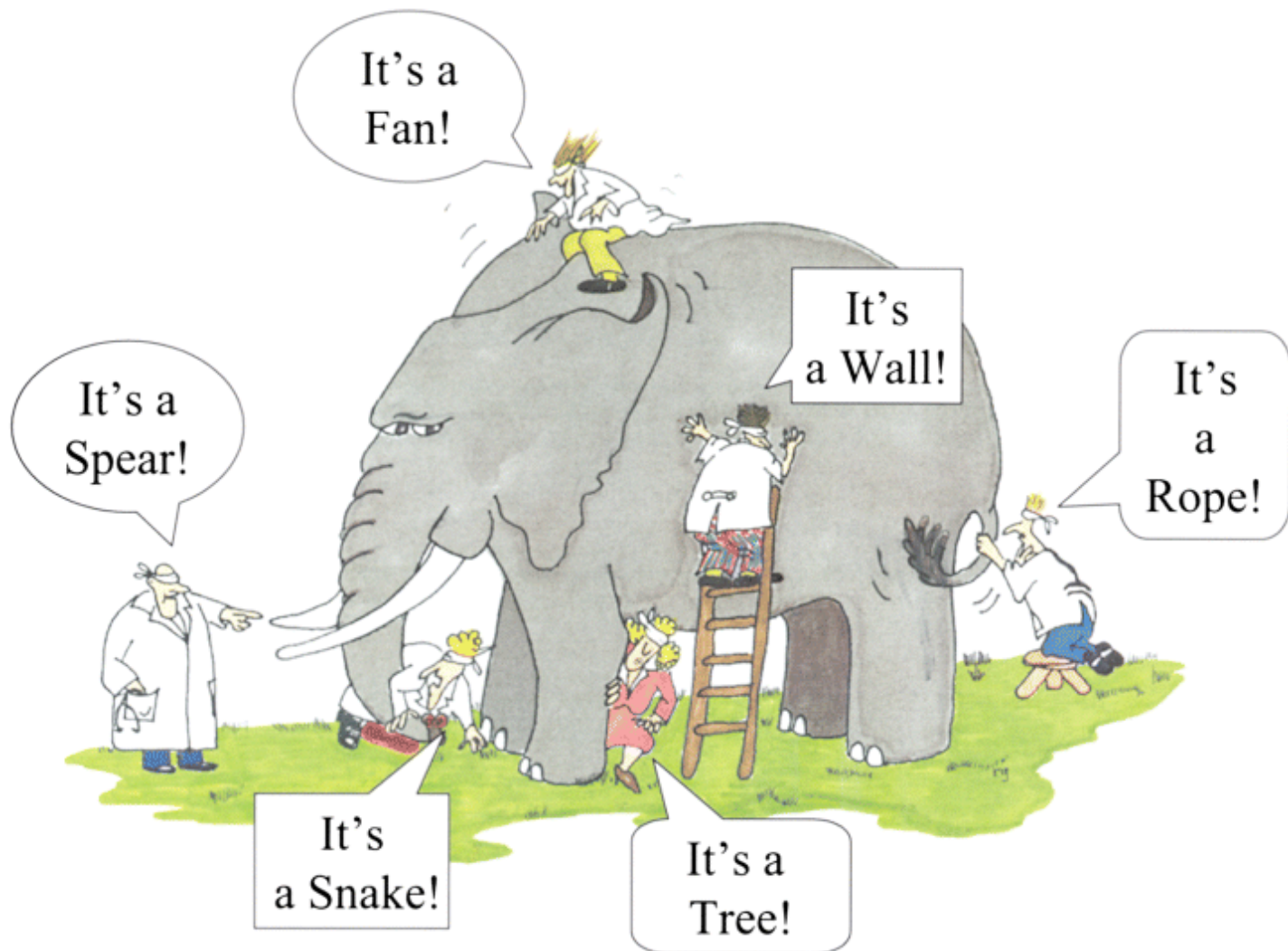
# Perspective taking

Show how you are making efforts to stand back from your own position and guess about **others**'.

What might your **learners**, your **colleagues** or the **theory** suggest may be going on?

**Tip:** use language that shows you are trying to imagine how thing might look from others' perspectives, eg 'wonder'; 'guess'; 'suppose'

# No-one can see the whole elephant



# Example

*“I wondered whether the students were actually learning what I hoped they would, and if they were even aware themselves of what they were learning. They had evaluated the session very highly, scoring it as ‘very enjoyable’ (see Appendix 1)). I was really pleased about this, however I wondered whether their enjoyment might actually be a product of my enthusiasm for the topic. What if they had really loved the session but not actually learned the key points?”*

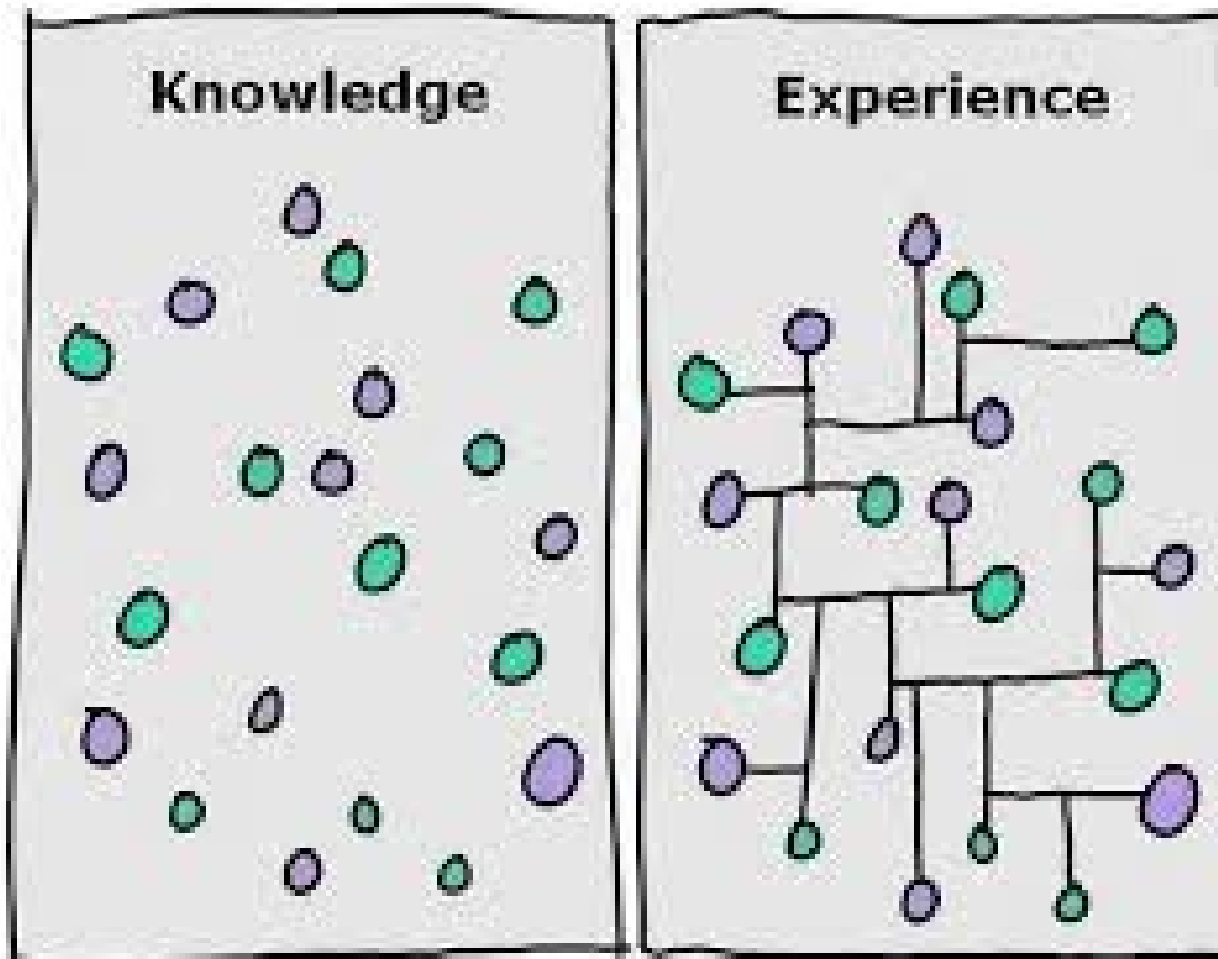
# Integration

Show that you are combining all the elements of your learning: what you **know**, what you **do** and what you **value**

**Tip:** make links and cross-reference



# The **connections** matter most



# Example

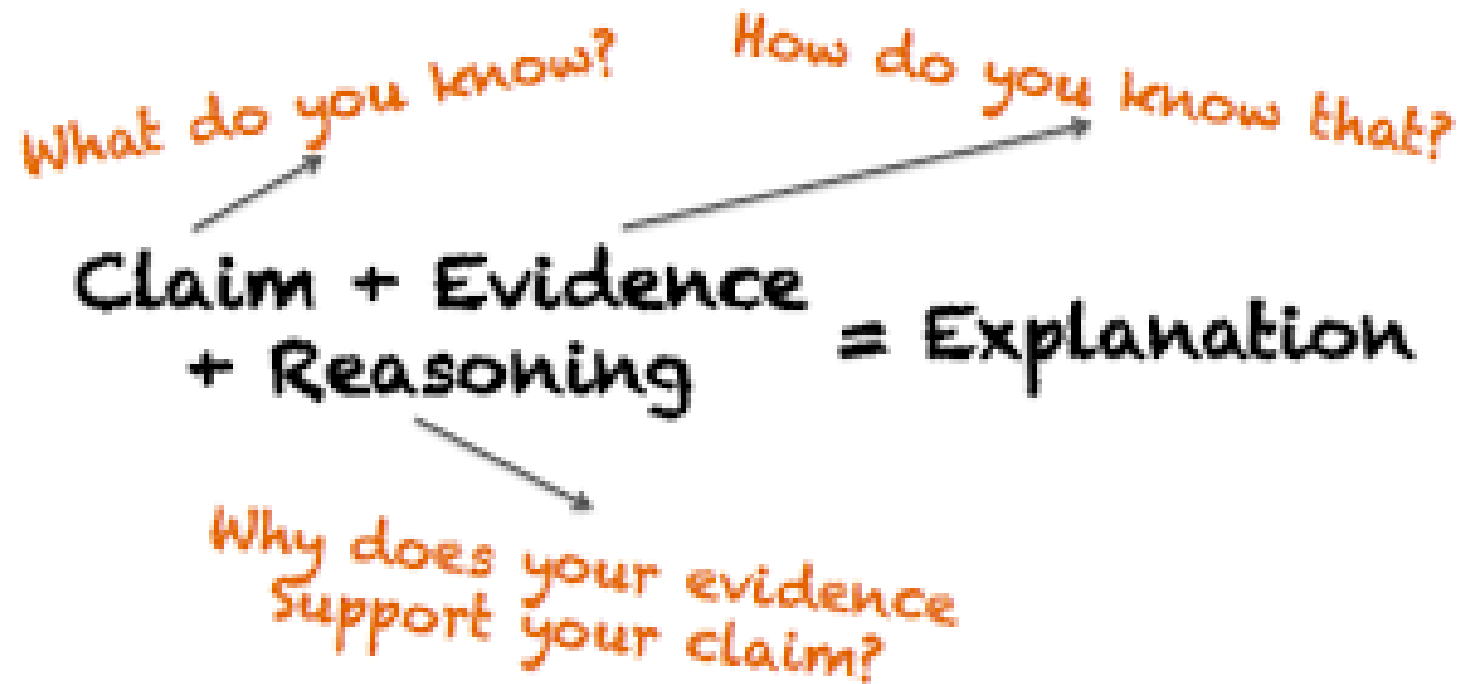
*“It is known that the right environment is of fundamental importance for effective learning, (Maslow, A. H. 1943). The physical environment of the doctors’ room is not ideal, and we have little control over this, so I decided to consider the ‘emotional’ environment of my tutorials. I thought back to my own time as a junior doctor on the ward and I remembered how anxious I had often been that I would answer a question wrongly. I began to wonder if there were things I could do to reassure the trainees ...”*

# Evidence

Show that you really are **thinking** about, **and doing**, the things that you are writing about

**Tip:** refer liberally to appendices

# What is your learning based on?



# Example

*“I was keen to ensure that the students knew what they would be expected to know by the end of my session. I found the acronym ‘MMUCKO’ in the ‘Planning and Evaluating Your Teaching’ workshop (Appendix 2) useful as it reminded me that I needed to have clear learning objectives at the outset of the tutorial. The feedback from the previous carousel of students (Appendix 3) had suggested that some of them had not really learned what I hoped they would, so I decided to ...”*

# Pitfalls

Using lots of description

Writing an  
academic essay

Not referencing  
appendices



# Academic vs reflective writing

## Academic

Subject not personal

Writing is the  
representation of learning

Writing is the product of  
the thinking process

## Reflective

Subject matter personal

Writing is for the purpose  
of learning

Writing involves the  
process of thinking

# More support for reflective writing

Moon, J. A. (2004) A Handbook of Reflective and Experiential Learning: Theory and Practice, London: Routledge.

The 'Resources' section, especially resource numbers:

1: map of RW (p 184-5)

2: initial guidance (186-189)

5: examples of different 'depths' of RW: 'The Park' (p196-203)

7: questions to support RW (210-211)

9: framework for RW (p214-216)



So, how can you best  
get started?

# Gather things to reflect on...

- Learning cards for at least three workshops
- ‘Teaching Observation and Feedback’ document (including the ‘self-reflection’ part)
- Record or log of your teaching
- Feedback from your learners (and any reflections you have on this)
- Anything else you think is useful to reflect on

# Part 1: 3000-3500 words

Choose **two aspects of your practice**. Select *specific examples*. Reflect on these in detail in the light of your learning about clinical education, and about yourself as a clinical educator, on the CEP. Make liberal references to your appendices to illustrate what you are saying.

1. Designing and planning learning activities.
2. Teaching and supporting learning.
3. Assessing and giving feedback.
4. Developing effective learning environments; offering support .
5. Integrating scholarship, research and professional activities.

## Part 2: 1000-1500 words

Consider your ‘**philosophy of clinical education**’. Draw on some of the specific examples used in Part 1 and frame these *more generally* in the context of your values and your beliefs about clinical education.

1. Respecting learners and diverse communities.
2. Promoting participation in higher education.
3. Using evidence informed approaches.
4. Developing and evaluating practice.
5. Constraints and affordances of research / clinical setting.

# Plan your assignment

- In groups of 3-4: 20 minutes
  - Individually plan your approach to the assignment
  - Then share your ideas with your group
  - Then circulate around the room if you like
  - Ask me for help at any time

# And finally ...

- Any other questions?
- Please complete the feedback forms

# References

Bolton, G. (2014) **Reflective Practice: Writing and Professional Development**. London: SAGE.

General Medical Council. (2009) **Tomorrow's Doctors**. GMC.

Gibbs, G. (1988) **Learning by Doing: A Guide to Teaching and Learning Methods**. Birmingham: SCED.

Moon, J. (1999) **Reflection in Learning and Professional Development**. London: Kogan Page.

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