

### A Poor Example of a Reflective Note:

I saw Mary Binner, my co-assigned nurse, not wash her hands after performing pericare on Mrs. Jones. Not washing her hands after pericare was disgusting and against infection control policies. What made it even worse was that Mary went immediately to feed Mr. Smith in the next bed. When I was back at practicum the next week, Mr. Smith, the man Mary had fed, was in isolation due to a nosocomial infection. This shows that Mary is incompetent, and it also shows the importance of good hand hygiene.

### A Good Example of a Reflective Note

I saw a nurse not wash her hands after performing pericare on a client. Not washing her hands after pericare goes against the hospital's infection control policies (place reference here). The situation was made even worse when the nurse immediately went to feed the client in the next bed. When I was back at practicum the next week, the client in the next bed had been put in isolation due to a nosocomial infection. This experience demonstrates the importance of good hand hygiene.

### References

Durham College. (2011). *Practical nursing program guide*.

Oshawa, Ontario: Author.

Tri-College University. (n.d.). *Guidelines for writing reflections*.

Retrieved November 29, 2011, from

[www.tri-college.org/fileadmin/tri-](http://www.tri-college.org/fileadmin/tri-college.org/c_reflection_guidelines)

[college.org/c\\_reflection\\_guidelines](http://www.tri-college.org/fileadmin/tri-college.org/c_reflection_guidelines)



If you need more help, make an appointment with us at...

### Student Academic Learning Services

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or

visit our front desk in room 204,  
Student Services Building (SSB)

# Student Academic Learning Services

## Reflective Notes (for RPNs)

## Purpose

A reflective note helps you to examine your learning experiences and integrate your feelings and reactions to those learning experiences in your writing so that it is meaningful to you and your reader. A reflective note should not focus on what you did as much as it should focus on what you learned from what you did.

## What Your Professor Expects

Your professor wants to read your thoughts about what your learning meant and why it was significant. You should show that you have made connections between what you have learned in class and what you have experienced. If you have consulted any external sources, your professor expects you to reference those sources.

## Clarity and Professionalism

At college you will generally be writing for your professor, but you could write for your practicum supervisor or peers. Remember that your reflective note is not a diary entry, so keep your writing clear, formal, and professional.

## Context and Relevance

Provide information that is directly relevant to your point. Provide some context for your reader, but don't retell the entire story.

## Depth of Analysis

How much depth you go into depends on the topic and the assignment. Check your rubric and assignment guidelines for information.

### Example of a story to summarize:

When I entered my client's room, I found her lying on the floor. I immediately checked to see if the client was okay, and I assisted the client into bed. Then I called for a nurse to come and check the client. When the nurse arrived, she started yelling at me claiming it was my fault the client had fallen. I was angry and afraid. I had done nothing wrong, but this nurse didn't even give me a chance to explain.

**The summary of the story above should tell the reader the general idea of the experience/story, emphasizing those details essential to the reflective paper.**

I was criticized in front of my patient without the opportunity to explain the situation. I am a student and I am here to learn, but instead of learning how to deal with a client fall, I was belittled and terrified.

## Steps for Writing a Reflection

1. Summarize the issue/experience concisely and in your own words.
2. Support your perspective with examples from your own experience.
3. Question any elements, theories, approaches, or conclusions.
4. Consider the expectations you held prior to the experience. Note any potential biases or preconceptions.

5. Draw your own tentative conclusions and/or applications to future experiences.
6. Identify and ask any remaining questions.
7. Refer to your rubric to ensure you have met the assignment criteria.
8. Check your reflective note for grammar, spelling, format, and referencing.

## Guidelines to Follow

- Follow the guidelines for written assignments set out in the Practical Nursing Program Guide.
- Make sure your reflective note has a clear introduction, a body, and a conclusion.
- Write in the 1<sup>st</sup> person; use 'I' in your reflective writing, unless your professor advises otherwise.
- Maintain confidentiality. Do not use the client's name if you are referring to an actual experience.
- If your reflection is based on a story provided by your professor, use the names given in the story.
- Be consistent with your use of key terms. For instance, write 'client' or write 'patient' throughout your reflective note.
- Be specific. Avoid vague statements that might confuse your reader.
- Be as objective and non-judgmental as possible.