

AcaWriter Overview

Reflection and Reflective Writing

“We do not learn from experience... we learn from reflecting on experience.”
 (John Dewey, philosopher and educator)

You may be a very reflective person, but if you can't express yourself, nobody else will be able to recognise that. Reflective writing is a way to make your thinking visible. This will be critical to your future development, e.g. when you're in interview, putting together a professional portfolio — or being assessed at university!

You may already recognise that the process of putting your thoughts into writing can help you clarify your thoughts. However, while you're used to writing analytical, argumentative essays or science reports, you may be less sure what good, professional, academic, reflective writing looks like. What's the difference between superficial and deeper reflection? Perhaps this is the first time you've been asked to do this.

AcaWriter

The *AcaWriter* website has been developed at UTS as a writing feedback tool to help clarify the hallmarks of good reflective writing, not just by giving you examples, but providing instant feedback on your own drafts.

AcaWriter works by looking for specific hallmarks of good reflective writing that signal (to your audience, the reader) that you're developing as a reflective learner and professional practitioner.

AcaWriter is not grading your writing. Instead, it gives you feedback to improve your draft. Nobody will see your documents other than you, and the UTS research team who is continually analysing AcaWriter. So please revise your draft and get feedback as many times as you want! The only version that will be assessed by your academics is what you submit via UTSONline.

Getting your feedback

AcaWriter uses annotations to show you different types of feedback and you can find out what each of the annotations mean in the key tab.

AcaWriter uses three coloured icons - the blue square, purple circle, and green triangle. These show where you have used the three most important features in reflective writing. Two additional icons are used – the red lightning bolt to show where the sentences are too long and hard to read, and the target to show where keywords are missing.

AcaWriter also uses three types of text formatting – **bold**, *green italicised*, and underlined – to show particular expressions that may be relevant to more reflective writing.

AcaWriter also includes a Feedback tab that provides you with additional feedback on your writing. This feedback will tell you where you have done well, as well as the areas you can improve.

The Resources tab provides you with additional information from your educator. This can include your assignment rubric, links to videos or journal articles, or further information to help you understand the feedback *AcaWriter* has provided.

Key
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- ✓ Expressions indicating belief, learning, or knowledge.
- ✓ *Expressions indicating self critique*

- ✓ 🎯 One or more keywords missing

- ✓ ⚡ Sentence too long, might disengage the reader. Try breaking it into smaller sentences

- ✓ ■ Initial thoughts and feelings about a significant experience.
- ✓ ● The challenge of new surprising or unfamiliar ideas, problems or learning experiences.
- ✓ **Deeper reflection, personally applied.**
- ✓ ▶ How new knowledge can lead to a change

Example Texts: Sometimes it's helpful to see examples of **other students' writing**. You can find examples from different disciplines by clicking 'Example Texts' tab at the top of the screen.

Get Feedback: Click the 'Get Feedback and Save' button to generate your report.

Display: Click the checkbox to display the annotation descriptions.

The screenshot shows the AcaWriter interface. At the top, there are navigation tabs: 'My Dashboard', 'Example Texts', and 'Manage Assignment'. The user is logged in as 'Jessica Hill'. The main content area is titled 'Reflection Assignment' and shows a 'Feedback and Draft Saved' timestamp. Below this, there are two columns of text. The left column contains the student's draft text, which is a reflection on group work. The right column contains a 'Reflective Report' generated by the software. This report includes a list of feedback points with checkboxes and a corresponding analysis of the student's text. The analysis highlights specific parts of the text with colored markers and explains their significance. For example, a blue square highlights the first sentence, indicating it shows initial thoughts. A purple circle highlights a sentence about the challenge of new ideas, indicating a challenge. A green triangle highlights a sentence about new knowledge leading to change, indicating understanding. The report also identifies expressions of belief, learning, or knowledge (plain underlining), deeper reflection (bold text), and self-critique (green italicized text).

The ■ shows where you have discussed your initial thoughts and feelings about a significant experience. Here the student talks about the ways they thought their teacher would help their learning.

The ● shows where you've discussed the challenge of a surprise, unfamiliar idea, problem or learning experience. You can see here the student talks about the unfamiliar concept of starting work placement.

The ▶ shows where you've demonstrated your understanding that new knowledge can lead to change. The student discusses how their learning on placement will shape them as a practicing pharmacist.

Plain underlining shows expressions indicating belief, learning or knowledge.

Sentences in bold show where you've engaged in deeper reflection, using phrases such as 'I could' or 'I would' – or in this case the student has used the words. "I can".

Green italicised font shows expressions indicating self-critique.

Click the **Feedback** tab on the horizontal bar to access written feedback from AcaWriter.

Example Texts Manage Assignment Jessica Hill ▾

[Get Feedback & Save](#) [Download PDF](#)

NOTE: Computers don't understand writing like humans. So, AcaWriter may highlight rhetorically good sentences that actually make no sense, or leave un-highlighted a sentence that you feel is really good. It's fine to disagree with the feedback — but it's also your job to check your facts!

Reflective Report **Feedback** Resources

- ✔ It appears that you've acknowledged your first thoughts, feelings and/or reactions to an incident, or learning task, within the first paragraph.
- ✔ Well done, it appears that you've reflected on how you would change/prepare for the future. Is there anything further to say about these new insights that have led to change.

- ✔ You have reflected on your beliefs/learning/knowledge.
- ✔ You seem to have incorporated a deeper reflection indicating self-critique.
- ✔ It appears that you have reflected on your feelings, thoughts or reactions.
- ✔ It appears that you have reflected in a deeper way about how your experiences connect with your professional development.

- ✔ It appears that you've reported on something you found challenging.
- ✔ It appears that you've reflected on how you would change/prepare for the future. Is there anything further to say about these new insights that have led to change.
- ✔ It appears that you may have expanded the detail on the challenge you faced. (1)
- ! While it appears that you've reported on how you would change/prepare for the future, you don't seem to have reported first on what you found challenging. Perhaps you've reflected only on the positive aspects in your report?.

The **!** lets you know there are some areas you can improve and will be accompanied by a written explanation of the areas of reflective writing you may need to revisit.

The **✔** shows that you have included elements of reflective writing and will be accompanied by a written explanation of what you have done well.

Click the **Resources** tab on the horizontal bar to access additional information from your tutor. You might find links to your assignment rubric, videos or journal articles, or further information to help you understand the feedback AcaWriter has provided.

Example Texts Manage Assignment Jessica Hill ▾

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Reflective Report Feedback **Resources**

AcaWriter tags (elements of reflective thinking processes) will guide your reflection. You are able to adjust your writing according to the feedback of AcaWriter. As you write your reflection please consider the following:

Throughout the reflection there may words that are bolded according to AcaWriter feedback, which will indicate a "deeper reflection, personally applied". This is something that you should aspire to achieve in your reflective statement.

1. A short description of the incident and how it came about (Related to Stage 1 of rubric)
2. Your thoughts, feelings, reactions to the incident (initial thoughts, feelings, reactions and if those change as a result of the incident then this should also be addressed in the reflective statement). As your initial thoughts, feelings and reactions are required to be addressed, it is likely that they would be initially addressed within the first paragraph of the statement and any changes to that may be addressed later in the statement. (Related to Stage 2 of Rubric and may include Words associated with strong feelings underlined in red as in AcaWriter).
3. Make associations with your prior studies, experience (personal and/or professional).(Related to Stage 3 of Rubric, and possibly addressing the Underline expressions related to learning and knowledge as in AcaWriter)
4. How do those associations relate to the incident and how it has impacted on you and your learning drawing on the integration of that knowledge? (Related to Stage 4 of Rubric, and possibly addressing the Underline expressions indicating belief, learning or knowledge as in AcaWriter).
5. Address any firmly held beliefs, assumptions, approaches you may have had and if these have changed as a result of the incident, explain how and why? (Related to Stage 5 of rubric, some issues may be challenging and therefore relate to the "Pink circle tag" in AcaWriter, and *green italics expressing indicating self critique* may be addressed here as in AcaWriter).
6. Address why you think your belief and/or value system is as it is? Were there any reasons that you can think of that made you think the way you do? (cultural, hereditary, family related, history etc) (Related to Stage 6 of Rubric, this may be confronting and something unfamiliar, related to ● in AcaWriter)
7. Address the outcomes of the reflection in terms of how things may have changed or should change for better future performance, practice, outcomes etc. Also drawing on your experiences, different viewpoints and previous knowledge leading to change. It is important to address how this has guided you to attain the relevant clinical competency standard and why? (Related to Stage 7 of Rubric and ► in AcaWriter)

Unfortunately, AcaWriter cannot comment on your poor spelling, grammar and incorrect drug names. This you will have to critique for yourself. My suggestion is peer review on your statement before you submit it for the summative assessment. Significant marks are deducted as indicated in the reflective rubric, for poor attention to detail such as poor spelling and errors in grammar. You are Masters of Pharmacy students and therefore a critical mind is essential. Please ensure you write and read carefully your submissions, critique it for accuracy and detail, providing the examples and integrated knowledge from your placement site. AcaWriter although a fabulous tool, has its limitations, it cannot replace your critical mind.