

What?/So What/Now What?

Introduction

What is it?

An activity for critical reflection. In a critical reflection, you explain how events, experiences, or new knowledge have led to your personal growth. A critical reflection is NOT simply a summary of what happened or a report of how you felt during an experience. For a reflection to be critical, you must look closely at your beliefs and actions during an experience and explain how you think or act differently as a result of that experience. Your reflection doesn't have to be about a positive or successful experience.



Why use it?

We often learn the most when things don't go right. The key is to choose an experience in which you learned something important that has challenged your beliefs or actions in some way. Chances are, the more challenging the experience, the more you'll have to talk about.

What you need:



30-45 minutes

- The attached instructions
- 3-5 or more people
- Pen and paper for each participant

What?/So What/Now What?

Instructions

Step 1: Create a grid

Create 3 rows on your paper and title each with “What?”, “So What?”, and “Now What?”

Step 2: Fill in your grid

Fill in each row starting from “What?” and moving to the next. Take your time and focus your answers on the situation you started to think with. Remember whatever you are reflecting about, be sure you provide specific examples, and explain the significance of what happened.

- **What?**
- What happened in a particular situation? Replay the event in your mind, what do you see? Be as objective as possible, no judgements.
- **So What?**
- Analyze the experience more deeply. What was important about the situation for you? How does this experience connect to course concepts? What did you learn?
- **Now What?**

Step 3: Explain what you have learned and how you will apply it

Finally, be sure to explain what you have learned and how you will apply this learning in future situations.

- Applying what you’ve learned. How have you changed or grown because of this experience? How will you think or act differently in future situations because of this experience? What are you going to do next?

Step 4: Discuss your answers

Once you have completed the rows find a partner or small group to discuss your answers. What did you learn from your partner or group mates? Was this exercise helpful for you to understand the reflection process? Do you see yourself or others finding this exercise helpful in the future?

Based on [What is a Critical Reflection? Introducing the “What, So What, Now What” Model](#) via [The University of Guelph McLaughlin Library](#) Creative Commons licensed.

