



Self-Reflection Interaction

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1. Exercise 1 – Initial Thoughts

These exercises will guide you through parts of the Self-Reflection process. They will work best if you use an example from your own life – a situation you were recently in or an experience you had.

Ask yourself the following questions:

1. Why do you want to learn how to self-reflect?
2. What situation / experience do you have in mind?
3. What do you hope to achieve through Self-Reflection?



2. Exercise 2 – Choose your Topic

In this part let's get more specific with your chosen situation or experience:

1. What was the situation / experience about?
2. Who was involved?
3. If its is a more general situation/experience (e.g. not being active in classes) – can you name specific examples?



3. Exercise 3 – Reflective Cycle

Let us use Gibb's Reflective Cycle on your chosen topic. Take your time and try to answer each of these questions:

1. Description: What has happened?
2. Feelings: What did I think and feel?
3. Evaluation: Which parts of the experience were good? And which were bad?
4. Analysis: What does this situation mean? What makes sense?
5. Conclusion: What should I have done different / not at all?
6. Action Plan: What would I do differently next time?



Now, let us focus on the Critical Reflection.

Take a critical look at your topic and work through the following questions. In the end can see some examples for such a Critical Reflection.

1. Own values and assumptions:

- Which assumptions have influenced my thinking and my actions?
- Which values or convictions were important to me in this?
- Why did I take something as granted, or viewed it as “normal” or “right”?
- Which prejudices or expectations could have played a role?



The second step asks you to incorporate different points of view. How was your topic for others involved or present?

2. Different points of view:

- How could other participants have experienced your topic?
- Whose perspective was considered, and whose perspective has been ignored?
- Whose voices were particularly prominent?
- Who had less opportunities to contribute to your situation or experience?



4. Exercise 4 – Challenge your View

In this third and last part of this exercise, let us look at power, societal structures and frameworks, that influenced your topic:

- Which roles, rules, or societal expectations influenced the situation?
- Which balance of power was part of the situation? Who had stakes in that and why?
- Who profited from the situation, and who did not?
- Which societal, cultural, or institutional factors played a role as well?

Do you understand your topic better now? What have you learned?



5. Further Examples & Sample Solutions EUPeace

Thank you for working on a topic of your own choosing.

The following part of this interaction contains four more examples from every day student life. Please read through each of them and try to answer the questions before looking at some possible answers provided as well.



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5. Further Examples & Sample Solutions EUPeace

Example 1 – “Seminar participation”

In the seminar, students are expected to contribute regularly to the discussion. Those who contribute frequently are regarded as engaged and well-prepared. Students who rarely speak up tend to be perceived as reserved or less interested. When assessing students, the lecturer also takes into account how actively they participate in discussions.

In a seminar, I notice that it is always the same students who take part in the discussion. At first, I think that some of my fellow students are simply better prepared or more confident. However, when I reflect critically on the situation, I begin to think about it more carefully.

In doing so, I realise that my own assumptions and expectations also play a role. Perhaps I automatically assume that students who speak up frequently are particularly competent.



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This assumption could be shaped by my previous experiences or by cultural notions of what active participation in higher education should look like.

I also question why it is considered 'normal' in the seminar for only a few people to speak whilst others remain silent. Perhaps some students feel insecure because they haven't been speaking the course language for very long or because they're afraid of saying something wrong.

I also wonder whose voices are given particular attention in the seminar and whose are not. Are there structures or expectations within the seminar that mean some people are more likely to participate than others? Perhaps factors such as self-confidence, language or group dynamics play a role.



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Here are some questions for this example that you should try to answer:

- Which assumptions about „good students“ became visible?
- What value are behind these assumptions and expectations?
- Who could be at a disadvantage because of this point of view?
- How is this concept of active participation not equally suitable for all?



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And here are some possible answers:

- **Which assumptions about „good students“ became visible?**

Good students participate actively and frequently talk in seminars.

- **What value are behind these assumptions and expectations?**

Activity, Visibility, Engagement and willingness to perform, communication as a central component of the learning process, comparability of performance (through visible behaviour)



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And here are some possible answers:

- **Who could be at a disadvantage because of this point of view?**
 - Introverted students and students who feel uncomfortable speaking in front of a group,
 - Students with language barriers (e.g. non-native speakers)
 - People with insecurities
 - Students who are well-prepared, but prefer a written learning pathway or the oral one



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And here are some possible answers:

- **How is this concept of active participation not equally suitable for all?**
 - Equalling oral participation with competence is not always justified.
 - There are many forms of active participation that get ignored here (active listening, thinking along, written notes)
 - The expectation that successful learning in a seminar requires real contribution is not suitable for everybody.
 - This can lead to a structural disadvantage or discrimination of certain groups of students.



5. Further Examples & Sample Solutions EUPeace

Here is another example for you to practice on:

Example 2 - „Group assignment“:

In group projects, all members are expected to contribute equally. Students who complete tasks quickly and take on responsibility are seen as particularly committed. If someone works less visibly or keeps a low profile, this is often interpreted as a lack of commitment.

Questions you should answer:

- Which assumptions about „good cooperation“ are contained here?
- Are there different ways to contribute to a group project?
- Who could get discriminated because of assumptions above?



5. Further Examples & Sample Solutions EUPeace

And here are some possible answers:

- **Which assumptions about „good cooperation“ are contained here?**

- All students can and should contribute equally.
- Visible activity (e.g. speaking, presenting) equals engagement.
- Less visibility means less contribution.

- **Are there different ways to contribute to a group project?**

There are many different roles group members can have: e.g. speaker (leading discussions, presenting), organizer (managing meetings, making sure everybody is involved), researcher (finding and working through material), graphic designer (creating charts, maps, ...)

Even small contributions can be meaningful (e.g. a good thought or impetus, a new idea), not every contribution can be measured (e.g. moral

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And here are some possible answers:

- **Are there different ways to contribute to a group project?**
 - There are many different roles group members can have: e.g. speaker (leading discussions, presenting), organizer (managing meetings, making sure everybody is involved), researcher (finding and working through material), graphic designer (creating charts, maps, ...), and many more.
 - Even small contributions can be meaningful (e.g. a good thought or impetus, a new idea).
 - Not every contribution can be quantified (e.g. moral support, time spent scheduling or proof-reading). Such „invisible“ contributions are often undervalued.



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And here are some possible answers:

- **Who could get discriminated because of assumptions above?**
 - People who prefer to work in the background (for research or organizational tasks)
 - Introverted people
 - People with other obligations (working a job or taking care of family members)
 - People with a language barrier (non-native speakers)



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5. Further Examples & Sample Solutions EUPeace

Example 3 – „Written Exams“

In written examinations, students are expected to present their knowledge in a structured and error-free manner under time pressure. Those who write quickly and make few mistakes generally achieve better marks. Students who need more time to think or who feel exam-related stress often perform less well.

Questions for you to answer:

- What assumptions are included in this example?
- What values are behind these assumptions?
- How can this be critically evaluated?



5. Further Examples & Sample Solutions EUPeace

Possible answers for this example:

- **What assumptions are included in this example?**
 - Speed is a sign of competence.
 - Knowledge must be reproducible under time pressure.
 - Understanding a subject means making no mistakes.
- **What values are behind these assumptions?**
 - Performance and comparability
 - Standardisation
 - Efficiency



5. Further Examples & Sample Solutions EUPeace

Possible answers for this example:

- **How can this be critically evaluated?**
 - Examinations do not only measure knowledge, they also measure stress tolerance and writing speed.
 - Not everybody excels at those latter two parameters equally, leading to potentially unfair comparisons where knowledge is not the only factor.
 - Alternative examination forms (e.g. portfolios) could make other competencies visible.



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5. Further Examples & Sample Solutions EUPeace

Example 4 – „Online Teaching“

In online seminars, students are expected to switch on their cameras and participate actively via the chat function or their microphones. Those who participate visibly are seen as interested and motivated. Students who leave their cameras switched off or who contribute less are often perceived as passive.

Questions for you to answer:

- What assumptions are included in this example?
- What could be reasons to not switch on the camera?
- How can this be critically evaluated?



5. Further Examples & Sample Solutions EUPeace

Possible answers for this example:

- **What assumptions are included in this example?**
 - Being visible during a virtual seminar means being more engaged.
 - Having the camera switched on means paying closer attention to the course.
 - Active participation needs to be visible and audible.



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5. Further Examples & Sample Solutions EUPeace

Possible answers for this example:

- **What could be reasons to not switch on the camera?**
 - Slow internet connection;
 - Online privacy concerns;
 - Study-Life-Boundaries, keeping your home private;
 - Cultural reasons for switching off the camera (e.g. showing respect by not competing with the speaker for visibility; or high-context cultures vs. low-context cultures);
 - Feeling uncomfortable with being visible all the time.



5. Further Examples & Sample Solutions EUPeace

Possible answers for this example:

- How can this be critically evaluated?
 - Participation can be highly active, even if the camera is switched off (e.g. by listening actively, and by taking notes);
 - Enforcing a strict camera-on policy doesn't know acknowledge potential cultural differences and personal preferences;
 - Students with an instable internet connection are discriminated if being visible is equalled with being engaged.

What are your thoughts on these examples?

Did thinking about those questions help you gaining an awareness for the complexity of each situation?

Did your point of view change or did you gain new insights that might influence how you think about these examples in the future?



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