

WRITING A REFLECTIVE ACCOUNT AND AN ACTION PLAN: AN INDICATIVE GUIDE FOR PSYCHOLOGY STUDENTS

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Abstract

In this paper, I outline the steps towards writing a reflecting account and an action plan of a position statement. Basic steps into such a reflective account will provide psychology students with some ideas how to work on their position statements. Specific examples are not given for everyone's position statement is different from another. This paper is about a generic exploration so that students who will read it to pick and mix ideas from it with their own decisions as how advancing psychological knowledge and experience could sound like after they graduate. Finally, literature in the end will also be a general one, just a few good reference books a student could have a look at for further accumulation of knowledge on this topic.

Keywords: *Reflective account, position statement, action plan*

Introduction

Outlining the ways such a guide for students to be thought of and executed:

A. What is a reflective statement?

A reflective statement touches upon elements of personal growth and development. In academia, a reflective statement is about students' hindsight figuring out how education assists them growing prior to gaining their degrees.

The parts of a reflective statement could include:

1. **Description:** That needs to have been written as a brief narrative concerning the ideas of personal reflection.
2. **Analysis:** Addressing relevant experience that is appropriating the topics to be discussed.
3. **Synthesis:** Incorporating integrative ideas and insights as to the topics presented and discussed.
4. **Goal Setting:** Setting out short term and long-term goals in view to students' decision-making processes.

B. What is a position statement?

A position statement is about a useful tool of arguments to support one's focus on study/research. A position statement refers to who is writing it, the context that is about, the topic(s) that speaks about, what is the purpose writing one for.

C. What is an action plan?

An action plan is about steps and tasks needed to be completed so that the goals set to be achieved. Length and complexity of a goal or goals affects the length and complexity of the action plan. An action plan needs also to be updated and reviewed alongside the process towards completion of one's studies and what is planned in regard to continuing with one's personal growth and development in academia.

Presentation and Discussion

Specific parts will be presented and discussed offering some insights to students embarking on their course in psychology or about to graduate and planning.

Reflecting Account

Component 1 – Writing a Position Statement

Aims and aspirations in a position statement should refer to the plans completing a psychology degree. The time to consider which aims and aspirations to be in place should be around the beginning of the third year of studies. An impetus to that direction could be regarded the need of the student for personal development within the framework of psychology as well as to what psychology has to offer to someone who has one more year for the completion of one's studies. In this way, aims and aspirations will relate to issues probably associated to meeting objectives in psychology in terms of expanding one's knowledge, such as acquiring an understanding of the human behaviour in an accomplished respect, theoretically (ongoing research) and practically (empirical work with human participants).

On the other hand, the skills needed to meet one's aims, and aspirations will continue to improve as well. As much as these are detailed and focused, for instance integrating further research skills and/or advancing the scope for practical work in the field, aims and aspirations could be met. Outcome would be the cultivation of knowledge on psychology as an ongoing process in terms of concentration, good evaluation, constructive use of the literature, whilst also developing better learning skills in line with grasping the concepts and discerning what the necessity of skills is about. A clear position statement could also refer to the student's personal psychological development in view for instance of the benefits and costs one is focusing on becoming a professional psychologist both for personal gain as well as for the gains of others.

Speaking of skills, this is a dynamic procedure which takes time to be experienced and fulfilled. Concentration, good evaluation, and constructive use of the literature are some of the coping skills which assist one's development in learning. This latter could also lead to the increase of self-confidence in the development of one's skills. In parallel to that, one could also feel more confident dealing with one's worries by preparing a portfolio of their work as a student. During the final year of one's studies, when the focus is on developing their position statement, the experience that the skills have been acquired could prove an important fact to one's personal development for the professional choices that have to be decided after graduation.

Component 2 – Reflecting on General Skills Development

In trying one to be intellectually balanced and knowing exactly what to do throughout one's course and after graduating, is something that reflects to a good housekeeping. Good housekeeping helps students to aim towards their targets properly. Ways to do that is by organizing one's reading and writing style and not relying only on obtaining a good knowledge on psychology, but an experiential one as well. To be organizing one's style on learning could be by making a good use of time, for instance keeping notes, choosing research topics that are relevant to one's academic development and revising on the associated material. It is also good, one to be consulting with professional psychologists in the field one is interested to so to acquire good foundations regarding the profession of psychology in society. One by being well-organized, one comprises good learning skills and an appropriate scientific milieu both in the study and practice of psychology.

I. T. skills in that direction provide also a very good assistance with regards to the communication and interaction with other psychological scientists as well. In saying that, one should also have access to the current bibliography, articles, and publications through several different online platforms, such as EBSCO, PsycINFO, Google Scholar, Academia, ResearchGate, etc. In such a respect, one's knowledge on psychological topics will be further enhanced and improved.

Keeping also note etiquettes is very helpful. Working topics through note taking is very useful for a student to adhere to one's own for it is like highlighting and underlining phrases which can expand one's locus of attention in research. Reading through note etiquettes could keep one further concentrated and accurate on the psychological knowledge one is being advancing at.

Alongside with that, one's style on essay writing will appear more sufficient as well. When, for instance, writing an essay, at first there could take place a subject overview, in view to endeavouring for the meaning of concepts. Also, making notes and writing down all possible questions which could refer to the subject. Also, in attempting to see the question addressed in relation to the material being found, other learning resources need to be considered: i.e., integrative approaches in the understanding of the topic and writing about it with literature coming from other areas of psychology. Resourcefulness might be a good start when writing an essay, such as searching through the appropriate format throughout all parts of it; taking into consideration, as an example, the APA style of writing an essay or paper, later. The use also of evidence to support one's argument, so to come to a discussion can expand the argument further and elaborate the topic of the subject matter.

To such an extent, peers and colleagues could also be another resource to be consulted via discussions and presentation of literature towards obtaining further guidance. Finally, but not the least, references also to supporting students' thoughts and ideas, could as well be of importance to look for guidance from. In this way, arguments can become stronger, presented with evidence or alternate interpretations which might suffice well the topic in question.

Component 3 – Reflecting on one’s Learning Style Development

Approach to one’s learning style needs to be specific. That means that the student is in touch with the studying material. In adhering as thus, could be like envisaging that by working out assignments and coursework a personal approach to writing essays is also being built up. In elaborating such style of learning may also have an impact on one’s inner abilities and character of writing. One’s reflection to that style of approach becomes then more dynamic. It develops further one’s learning style by cultivating one’s skills more efficiently. By keeping on such a path, the knowledge that could be acquired is not only meeting one’s personal standards on reflective writing, but also working towards evaluating its pros and cons to the sense one to be rendered more intuitive regarding one’s future development.

Evidence for such a constructive self-reflection could be a student’s ability to aiming high, to score better marks, to follow clearer the instructions given from their tutors and lecturers, to follow up with the past and present bibliography, to understand statistics and, although this looks strange, to ...like statistics, to have a good knowledge and understanding of the terms employed and to write up on the topic researched for. Also arriving on time in lectures could be a plus for self-reflection purposes. A good also suggestion could be for students to submitting their assignments not on the deadline but before so to have evidence that they can work their deadlines on time or well before dates of work submission. That could better enhance their ability to managing own time better and advancing own affairs of good housekeeping.

Finally, in receiving feedback from tutors to be employed as something that helps using research and writing about it in a better and more precise way. The latter could also assist students to offering counter-feedback to themselves, in relation with the suggestions and advices evaluating further one’s personal enhancement and progress.

Component 4 – Reflecting on Action Plan

An obstacle might be identified in one’s action plan could be one’s studies to be progressing without biases, such as catastrophising or thinking of the worst-case scenario if one needs to re-submit an assignment that wasn’t successful when got submitted in the first place. Conscientiousness could be the term to use in the above example. One by being conscientious would be able to better handle information and knowledge gathered after or during studying. In such a manner, one’s understanding of psychology could accumulate that topics in its research aren’t flexible, that they develop and/or change, even for the terms used, so that the knowledge gained to offer better integration on the topics studied as well as on the empirical (quantitative and qualitative) angles which associate with them.

Self-reflection could further be enhanced via accepting that discrepancies do happen and when happen are a field of knowledge that can be further attained. To give an example, sometimes students may perceive that such a discrepancy might relate to their own views of the world and/or human interrelationships. That should not be considered as a problem or as something that wears off one’s effort and minimises it. It should be understood as an opportunity of change, not of course and/or necessarily regarding one’s personal views, but in terms one challenging oneself about what one can learn from a differing approach. At the same time, a student should consider

their personal understanding of current reality and expectations and whether one has got coping strategies to improve, so to fulfil one's expectations. One needs also to think whether expectations are feasible, hypothetical, or attainable. In that sense of approach, SMART goals could be a good example to be set, meaning that one has a plan in a small amount of time to achieve something that is specific, measurable, attainable, resourced, and timely. In other words, it is the goal set that is really needed and what would be the benefit of it for the student in the short and long term.

In this way, one could develop the skill of reflecting not only to one's successes but failures too. What is the meaning of success and whether by 'replicating' it could lead to further successes or failures? If it is about failures could that mean that there is a discrepancy in the ongoing process of learning for a better understanding how to continue with the effort spent. In other words, how to continue the same effort or alternating it so to achieve best possible results?

In relation to the latter, failures when outlined and studied could possibly lead to minimisation and reduction of academic harm. That means students will learn to accept failures as useful incidences and as by virtue of constructive learning pillars in the process of self-reflection. Failures should not be considered as problematic, but as opportunities for change and self-contemplation. Should not be considered as 'side-effects' but as ways of 'handling' in a right way one's potential future objectives so that personal professional prerequisites upon completion of studies to be met. In such a way, failures could also enhance one's inner dynamism in the process of self-furtherance of reflecting on the skills developed and how these could be additionally increased.

SKILLS OR LEARNING DEVELOPMENT:

1. Trying to keep in mind what previous lectures were about.
2. Trying to connect subject matters being studied with those coming next.
3. Trying to understand, primarily, many of the key words needed to advance personal progress.
4. Trying to work out terminology skills so to be able to adapt them in one's studies.
5. Trying to set out a well-organized plan towards successfully employing relevant resources available.

Potential gains of development

1. Relatedness with the core issues the lectures involve.
2. Good knowledge of theories and hypotheses that have founded psychology to track down the concepts related to the study of it.
3. Clear comprehension and precise understandability of the key aspects characterizing the weight of psychological views and approaches.

4. A thorough consideration of any psychological term in relation to the studies, so efforts towards deepening and clarifying reading skills to be met.
5. The use of resources as a tool towards organizing one's reading and studying time as well as one's choice what should one need to do first to properly elucidate the concepts studied in the course.

How will be recognized outcomes that have been achieved

1. Not long after the lecture has been delivered note-keeping to be studied and revised.
2. Each time thinking that a concept is leading to a new ground of psychological knowledge, so to connect it with the psychological understandings related to.
3. Whenever reading something, which is linked to aspects of study, to be given the attention of its academic weight, so that by learning it to advance personal development on the topics considered.
4. When reading or writing on a subject, which needs an interpretation for psychological terms to be defined, that could occur by investigating the possibility of a further expansion of personal commitment in the meaning of it, so to enhance the knowledge gained at it more precisely.

TARGETS

1. Scheduling revision on reading, notetaking and writing on a regular basis.
2. Reading notetaking and discussing concerns with peers.
3. Accessing resources and studying them even if at first sight might not look relevant to topics of interest.
4. Pointing out the hallmarks of issues one is interested in working on in psychology.
5. Using reference books where appropriate.

Possible obstacles

1. Working out with the studying material unbiased from any previous scientific background.
2. Combining integrative approaches in the study of psychology and developing a clear set of knowledge on the topics working with. The latter could be an obstacle in the sense that students may consider an integrative approach as problematic or minimising the potentials of each differing approaches as to the individual tenets these modalities have to offer.

Steps to overcome obstacles

1. Focusing only on the studies, so one's degree to be completed successfully.

2. Understanding what the course involves, so to follow the studying plan without been in a hurry.
3. Studying several other readings that expand psychological topics to acquire a more accumulative comprehension of the topics in question.

Conclusion

The current reflective account and action plan provides indicative ideas to students as how to work with their studies focusing on developing a better academic experience which they could follow, after graduation.

Certain examples haven't been given many, for the reason students of psychology have differing endeavours and encounter points of theoretical and practical experience, which is distinct from one another, even if they are studying for the same course.

In this account, what was important and stressed out was the fact that demonstrating self-reflection in academia is what is needed not only for the expansion of knowledge a student acquires, but also how to use that knowledge for the betterment of the society and the public.

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