

## An actual student sample to a Reflective Response (i.e., exercise/assignment at UTM)

Our task was to complete a full-term assignment that required all team members to contribute and collaborate in order to be successful. The act of working in a group required the work to be evenly distributed. Communication was key during the course of this assignment as having only one lecture a week, limited the amount of time we could communicate during class. Therefore, time outside of class was arranged to meet and complete the assignments to the best of our ability.

In my academic experience, teamwork has not always left a great impression. However, this experience allowed me to be more open-minded towards groupwork. Initially, I was not aware that the majority of the course would be based on teamwork. Most of the workload was done by one person, and the entire experience was unfulfilling. I had not considered the important role that collaboration plays in our growth as students and as people. This course described groupwork as a shared experience and the lectures and assignments were very effective at providing examples of effective group work. Moreover, during this course, the rationale for groupwork was discussed and practiced regularly.

The skills I have acquired are interdisciplinary and can be applied to my education in the future. Furthermore, being able to work collaboratively, problem solve and communicate in an effective manner are all skills that I can utilize in the coming years in whatever career I might pursue. Teamwork encourages each person to pull their own weight and working in an engaging and academic setting in order to benefit the entire group. For instance, if one were to become a surgeon and had encountered a difficult case which had an inconclusive diagnosis, teamwork would be essential. Multiple doctors would work together to problem solve by practicing the same collaborative skills that we experienced in class, which we could use to diagnose the patient in an appropriate manner.

## Rationale for Paragraph # 1

This paragraph attempts to describe the circumstances of the activity/exercise etc. (i.e., ... complete a full term assignment that required all team members to contribute and collaborate in order to be successful.) The content tends to focus on a descriptive vocabulary and does not attempt to analyze or interpret the task. For example, "... time outside of class was arranged to meet and complete the assignments to the best of our ability ." This represents the most basic form of reflection and serves only as a detailed recounting of an event (activity or exercise). There is limited reflective value in this paragraph other than its ability to record the details of what has transpired. However, a complete description is still essential in order to situate the paragraphs that follow. In other words, it is not possible to describe the impact of the task/experience without first articulating in detail what that task/experience was.

## Rationale for Paragraph # 2

Here, in the second paragraph, the writer attempts to place this description of an activity/exercise into a more meaningful context by stating that the previous experience with group work was a negative one: "Teamwork has not always left a great impression." By connecting the described experience with these negative associations, the writer not only describes the experience as negative but provides evidence to support that claim – "Most of the workload was done by one person, and the entire experience was unfulfilling." The evidence is that the work was not shared and was thrust to a single group member. The result is problematic and the writer has identified that scenario as having contributed to the feeling of being unfulfilled. The writer also emphasizes a key focus of the course, which addressed "group group as a shared experience".

## Rationale for Paragraph # 3

In this last paragraph, the individual has attempted to apply this experience to a future learning opportunity. In this section the writer states: "The skills I have acquired are interdisciplinary and can be applied to my education in the future." Therefore, in this last portion, which represents the deepest form of reflection, the writer is attempting to explore how a given activity/exercise may be applied in a future context. This is essential in order to maximize the benefits that result from the use of Reflective Practice. Here again, we see the writer refer to specific examples – "Teamwork encourages each person to pull their own weight and working in an engaging and academic setting in order to benefit the entire group." This excerpt refers to a general example that builds on the course concept of teamwork articulated in the previous section. However, the writer is aware that evidence is essential to support a claim and goes on to add the following specific example - "For instance, if one were to become a surgeon and had encountered a difficult case which had an inconclusive diagnosis, teamwork would be essential."

If you would like additional guidance or have any specific questions, please feel free to reach out to the Robert Gillespie academic Skills Centre for support with Reflective Practice (Reflective Writing & Thinking).

<https://www.utm.utoronto.ca/asc/>

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