The Reflection Paper

The Reflection Paper is an assignment that requires you to consider how your personal experiences and observations shape your thinking and your acceptance of new ideas or practices. It is discipline and course specific and might take the form of a short paper on course readings, or a response to a service placement opportunity. Therefore, it is important to check your syllabus and/or rubric to ensure you include all the requirements of the assignment.

Key traits of a reflection paper are:

- A connection to the course readings with personal knowledge and experience in order to further comprehend the readings. Unlike other forms of writing, the first-person pronoun “I” is welcomed.
- The writer questions their assumptions about course readings or service placement opportunity (Trent University, n.d.).
- A reflection paper can have an open format that explores and connects course content with life experience(s).
- While the reflection paper does not need a thesis statement, it is often argumentative.
- The reflection paper does not need to be conclusive, but can identify gaps in knowledge, make connections, or challenge prior beliefs (University of Toronto, 2014).

As with other academic writing, a reflection paper will typically include all four components of a writing assignment. This consists of:

- **An Introduction paragraph:** It will identify the paper’s topic, describe the major course concept/theory and state what the paper is going to explore/argue
- **Body Paragraph(s):** Describe the situation or context being analyzed, the writer describes their reaction or experience and then connect the experience to the theory.
- **Conclusion:** The writer summarizes their new learning and explains the implications of future practice.
- **Citation:** Check instructions to see which citation style is required.
References

Trent University, (n.d.). How to Write a Reflection Paper.