



GUIDANCE FOR SHOGO CANDIDATES THESIS SUBMISSION  
AN INTRODUCTION TO REFLECTIVE WRITING

**A Reflective Thesis – Why Choose this rather than a research Thesis ?**

- Knowing how you teach makes you a more effective teacher
- Allows you to illustrate how you actively participate in your own Martial Arts development
- Demonstrates clarity in your thinking as a Martial Artist

**There are recognised levels of reflective writing:**

- **Level 1**
  - Descriptive Writing
- **Level 2**
  - Descriptive account with some reflection
- **Level 3**
  - Reflective writing 1
- **Level 4**
  - Reflective writing 2

**Level 1.** Descriptive...tells a story

**Level 2.** Description with some basic reflection- some questioning – standing back – reflection does not go deep enough to enable the learning to begin..

**Level 3 Reflective writing..** Not description- focus is on an attempt to reflect on the event and learn from it- more analysis of the situation..However no realisation that reflection is affected by your own frame of reference at the time or now- no sense of going beyond and checking out the possibility that your frame of reference might be affected by your prior experiences

**Level 4 - Reflective writing 2...** Shows evidence of ‘standing back’.. Internal dialogue with one self.. Evidence of looking at the views of others and considering an alternative viewpoint..significance of the passage of time..personal frame of reference has influenced actions..reconstructing the event in retrospect..things to be learned from the situation..reflect on ones own process of reflection acting metacognitively recognising that one’s own process influenced the outcome....



### A simple example :

1. I took the dog for a walk this morning  
Level 1: Descriptive
2. I took the dog for a walk this morning, which I don't usually do.  
Level 2: Descriptive, some reflection
3. I took the dog for a walk this morning, which I don't usually do. It really woke me up!  
Level 3: Descriptive, reflection and awareness/learning.
4. I took the dog for a walk this morning, which I don't usually do. It really woke me up! I think I will do that every morning before work.  
Level 4: Descriptive, reflection, learning and future action.

**Ref: Moon,J. (2004) *A Handbook of Reflective and Experiential Learning: Theory and Practice*. London: Routledge Falmer**

### Introduction

Reflection is a tool for self-analysis during the process of experiential knowledge. The following models, structures and frameworks can help you to facilitate the reflective process.

Before exploring these frameworks, distinctions are needed to be made about different types of reflection.

Reflection *on* action is looking back after the event whilst reflection *in* action is happening during the event.

- 1) Gibbs Framework for Reflection
- 2) Borton's Framework Guiding Reflective Activities
- 3) Chris Johns Model of Structured Reflection

Which ever model –(if any)–you chose to help you, the process of reflective writing should lead to more than just a gain in your knowledge it should also challenge the concepts and theories by which you make sense of knowledge. When you reflect on a situation you do not simply see more, you see differently.

***“Action is the final stage of reflection”*** (Atkins and Murphy 1994).



### Gibbs Framework for Reflection

#### Stage 1: Description of the event

Describe in detail the event you are reflecting on.

Include e.g. where were you; who else was there; why were you there; what were you doing; what were other people doing; what was the context of the event; what happened; what was your part in this; what parts did the other people play; what was the result.

#### Stage 2: Feelings and Thoughts (Self awareness)

At this stage, try to recall and explore those things that were going on inside your head. Include:

- How you were feeling when the event started?
- What you were thinking about at the time?
- How did it make you feel?
- How did other people make you feel?
- How did you feel about the outcome of the event?
- What do you think about it now?

#### Stage 3: Evaluation

Try to evaluate or make a judgement about what has happened. Consider what was good about the experience and what was bad about the experience or what did or didn't go so well

#### Stage 4: Analysis

Break the event down into its component parts so they can be explored separately. You may need to ask more detailed questions about the answers to the last stage. Include:

- What went well?
- What did you do well?
- What did others do well?
- What went wrong or did not turn out how it should have done?
- In what way did you or others contribute to this?



### Stage 5: Conclusion (Synthesis)

This differs from the evaluation stage in that now you have explored the issue from different angles and have a lot of information to base your judgement. It is here that you are likely to develop insight into you own and other people's behaviour in terms of how they contributed to the outcome of the event. Remember the purpose of reflection is to learn from an experience. Without detailed analysis and honest exploration that occurs during all the previous stages, it is unlikely that all aspects of the event will be taken into account and therefore valuable opportunities for learning can be missed. During this stage you should ask yourself what you could have done differently.

### Stage 6: Action Plan

During this stage you should think yourself forward into encountering the event again and to plan what you would do – would you act differently or would you be likely to do the same?

Here the cycle is tentatively completed and suggests that should the event occur again it will be the focus of another reflective cycle

### Gibbs' model of reflection (1988)



Gibbs model incorporates all the core skills of reflection. Arguably it is focused on reflection on action, but with practice it could be used to focus on reflection *in* and *before* action.



[Bortons` \(1970\) Framework Guiding Reflective Activities](#)

What?	So What?	Now what?
This is the <i>description</i> and <i>self awareness</i> level and all questions start with the word what	This is the level of <i>analysis</i> and evaluation when we look deeper at what was behind the experience.	This is the level of <i>synthesis</i> . Here we build on the previous levels these questions to enable us to consider alternative courses of action and choose what we are going to do next.
<p><b>Examples</b></p> What happened? What did I do? What did other do? What was I trying to achieve? What was good or bad about the experiences?	<p><b>Examples</b></p> So what is the importance of this? So what more do I need to know about this? So what have I learnt about this?	<p><b>Examples</b></p> Now what could I do? Now what do I need to do? Now what might I do? Now what might be the consequences of this action?

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[Chris Johns \( 1994-95\) Model of Structured Refection](#)

<u>Ways of knowing</u>	<u>Cues</u>
Aesthetics – the art of what we do, our own experiences	What was I trying to achieve? Why did I respond as I did? What were the consequences of that for the student? Others? Myself? How was this person (people) feeling? How did I Know this?
Personal – self awareness	How did I feel in this situation? What internal factors were influencing me?
Ethics – moral knowledge	How did my actions match my beliefs? What factors made me act in an incongruent way?
Empirics – scientific	What knowledge did or should have informed me?

The framework uses cues which are then divided into more focuses to promote detailed reflection.

- **Description of the experience**
  - Phenomenon – describe the here and now experience
  - Casual – what essential factors contributed to this experience?
  - Context - what are the significant background factors to this experience?
  - Clarifying – what are the key processes for reflection in this experience?
- **Reflection**
  - What was I trying to achieve?
  - Why did I intervene as I did?
  - What were the consequences of my actions for:
    - Myself?
    - The student / others?
    - My Colleagues?
  - How did I feel about this experience when it was happening?
  - How did the student feel about it?
  - How do I know how the student felt about it?



- **Influencing factors**
  - What internal factors influenced my decision – making?
  - What external factors influenced my decision – making?
  - What sources of knowledge did / should have influenced my decision – making?
  
- **Evaluation: Could I have dealt with the situation better?**
  - What other choices did I have?
  - What would be the consequences of these choices?
  
- **Learning**
  - How do I now feel about this experience?
  - How have I made sense of this experience in light of past experiences and future practice?
  - How has this experience changed my ways of knowing
    - Empirics – scientific
    - Ethics – moral knowledge
    - Personal – self awareness
    - Aesthetics – the art of what we do, our own experiences

## References

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