A reflection is not a report of factual information. It is an expression of your expectations, perceptions, and feelings of the experience represented by your evidence. It is essentially a journal of your personal growth. Reflective writing can assume many different forms. However, in the event that you need guidance regarding the structure of a reflection, below is the 3-R format of reflective writing utilized by many students.

1. **Reaction.** (Affective Domain, To Feel). As you reexamine this evidence, how do you feel about it now? Cite at least one example that illustrates your response.

2. **Relevance.** (Cognitive Domain, To Think). How is the evidence related to teaching and learning? How is the evidence meaningful or how does it contribute to your understanding of teaching and learning? What are some alternative viewpoints or perspectives that you now have and/or what are some changes/improvements you might make based on the experiences you have had? Cite examples to support your ideas.

3. **Responsibility** (Psychomotor Domain, To Do). How will the knowledge gained from the event or experience be used in your profession? Give examples of possible applications in your professional life, as well as an analysis of possible alternatives, other perspectives, or other meanings that might be related to the evidence. What are some questions you still have regarding this topic?

**GUIDE TO EFFECTIVE WRITING**

A reflection/reaction paper should have at least three parts:

- an introductory paragraph
- the body of the paper
- a closure paragraph **Introduction:** The introduction is a retelling of what happened. The introductory paragraph "sets the scene" by giving factual information. It should explain what the evidence is (e.g., a lesson plan from a microteach in Professional Teaching Practices) and should include the name of the portfolio section in which the evidence is included. State the who, what, when, and how of the experience represented by the evidence (e.g., "During fall semester, 199X, I had the opportunity to___"). **Body:** State what you expected or anticipated about the experience represented by the evidence. What did you actually experience, feel, observe, etc.? Be specific. Use "I" statements. Include all features
or elements that would allow an outsider to "see as you see" whatever you experienced. Analysis deals with reasons, motives, and interpretation during the event or experience. How is the evidence meaningful or how does it contribute to your understanding of teaching and learning? Closure: State how the experience has impacted you. How will it make you a better teacher? How will you take what you have learned from this experience and apply it to your own teaching when you have your own class(es)? Be specific. Include the name of the portfolio section in your closure.

REFLECTIVE WRITING EXAMPLE

PLANNING (Portfolio Section)

During Summer Semester 1998 in my Health and P.E. course, I had the opportunity to prepare and teach a health lesson on the topic of self-esteem. The lesson was geared toward first-grade students and focused on ways they could be special to others. I was able to present my lesson for a small group of classmates. This experience has helped me see the importance of planning when preparing a lesson. I have included a copy of the lesson plan as evidence.

Effective teaching requires careful planning. There also needs to be a lot of time, energy, and creativity put into planning in order for teachers to be able to plan learning experiences that encourage students to be successful in their learning. Teachers must have a clear focus on what they want the students to learn and how they plan to address key points.

After selecting my lesson, one of my first steps was to research the topic. I spent some time on the computer researching information on the Internet about self-esteem in younger children. I also looked at lesson plans from other teachers to see how they may have taught the same type of lesson. This helped me to see creative ways that I could adapt my lesson and make it more interesting and understandable to my students. After doing my research, I went back and reviewed my lesson again to see where I could make some changes. I chose to adapt my lesson plan by focusing on the aspect that you are special because you are a gift to others. I felt that by making these changes the learning experience would be more meaningful to my students.

The actual teaching experience allowed me to see the ways careful preparation of a lesson can be helpful. For example, when I explained to students that they could be a gift to others by their actions and gave some examples, they were able to make appropriate responses. Some students responded that they could help others by sharing, while others suggested that they could do things such as clean their rooms to be a gift.
Anytime I am given the chance to develop my skills as a teacher, it is a learning experience. I found this experience to be extremely valuable because it gave me the opportunity not only to plan a lesson, but also to teach it. Teaching helped me to see that being prepared is very important when addressing students. My background research of the topic helped me when students needed an alternative way to understand the concept. For instance, from my research I learned that students understand best when examples are given. My ability to provide examples helped students to better understand the concept of giving to make others happy. As an educator, it is my goal to create lessons that are adapted to reflect the different learning styles of my students.