

Integrating readings into reflective writing

Uses of readings in reflective writing

- Readings (as films and other course materials) can be the trigger for a reflection
- Readings can help explain the meaning of key terms or ideas
- Readings relate ideas to your personal experience
- Readings can challenge your ideas or justify your arguments

What are these readings being used for?

‘The readings this week challenged the idea of Spain as a unified country, not much different from other Western democratic nations – a perception I held until I started this subject.’

‘I used to believe it best to leave the wounds of the past to heal through the passing of time. However, reading about the recuperation of historical memory in Spain challenged my assumptions. Hadzelek’s article on the ‘Pact of Silence’ made me realise that when the dramatic episodes of our past are silenced, they may not vanish. They may be just simmering quietly under the surface.’

Avoiding pitfalls

Do's

- Relate readings to the learning process
- Be selective
- Follow referencing conventions

Think

- Was a reading the event that triggered your reflection?
- Did it provide arguments for your reflection?
- Did it explain a key idea?
- Did it change your views on a given topic?
- Did it illuminate a personal experience?
- Did it trigger a personal reaction?

What are the problems in this reflection?

'Lueck et al. have examined the representation of asylum seekers in the Australian media through the analysis of two incidents in 2009, the Oceanic Viking and the Jaya Lestari 5. They argue that media representations of asylum seekers are compatible with both neoliberal and nationalist discourses. They demonstrate that discourses concerning asylum seekers can be both related to the necessity of protecting the borders of the nation-state and neoliberal in the appeal to protect the economic rights of the Australian citizens. I had never truly thought of that.'

Writing reflectively

Structuring reflections

'I came across a line in a book in which **a historian argued** that, long ago, during the slavery era, black people and white people had defined their identities in opposition to each other. **The revelation to me** was not that black people had conceived of their identities in response to ours, but that our white identities had been composed in conscious objection to *theirs*. **I'd had no idea that** we had ever had to define our identities at all, because to me, white Americans were born fully formed, completely detached from any sort of complicated past. **Even now, I can remember** that shiver of recognition that only comes when you learn something that expands, just a tiny bit, your sense of reality. **What made me angry was** that this revelation was something about who I was. How much more did I not know about myself?'

Hansen, S. (2017) 'Unlearning the Myth of American Innocence' *The Guardian* 08/08/2017

Event, topic and context

Main finding

Examination of previous knowledge

Response to the finding

Response and conclusion

Linguistic expression

What are the main differences between genres?

REFLECTIVE WRITING

ESSAY WRITING

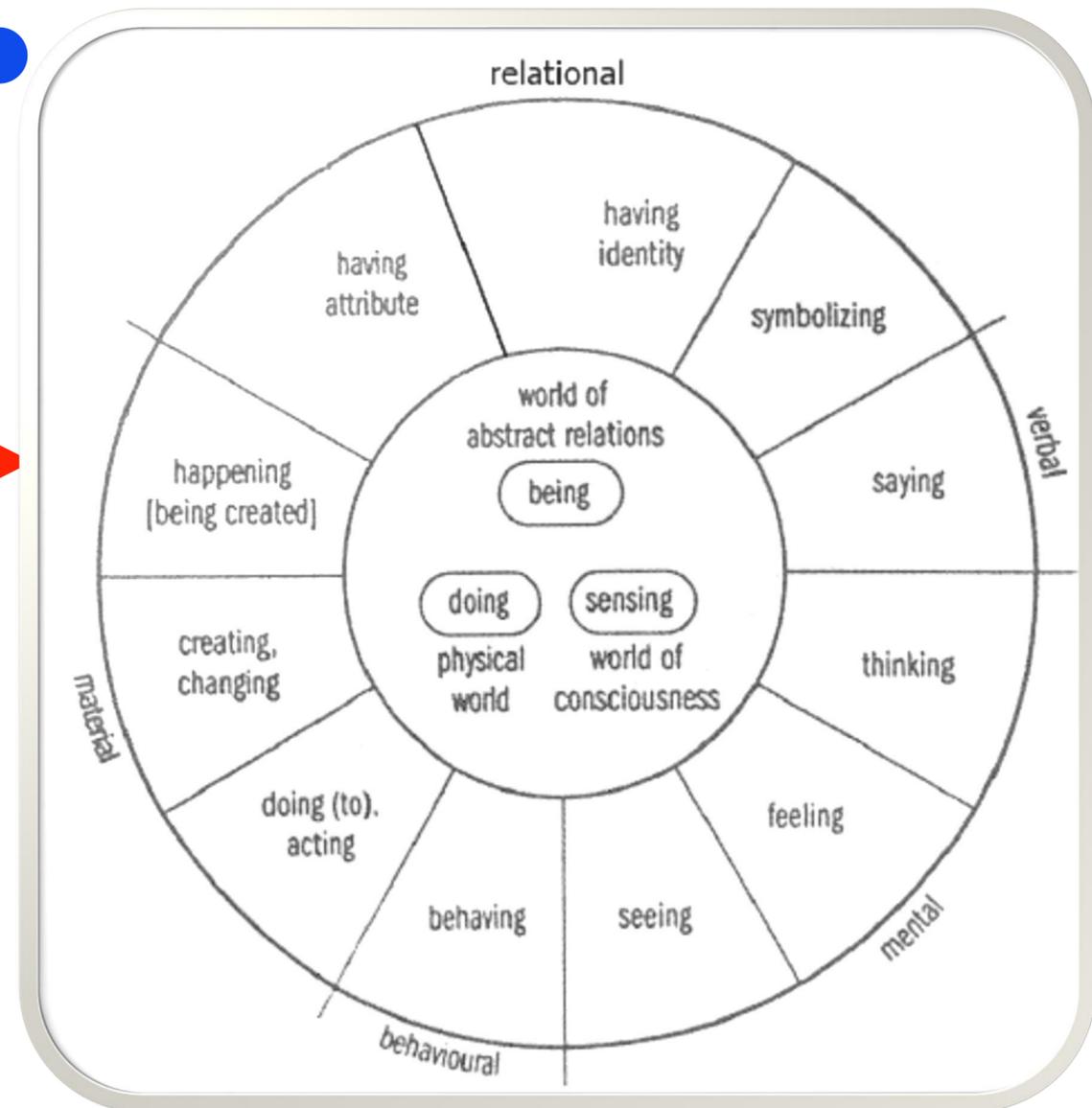
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The revelation to me was not that black people had conceived of their identities in response to ours, but that our white identities had been composed in conscious objection to theirs.

The book examines the definition of black and white identities in mutual opposition during the slavery era.

The discussion revolves around the idea that white identities were composed in conscious objection to black people's identities.

Halliday, M.A.K. 2004, *An Introduction to Functional Grammar* London, Hodder Headline 3rd ed. p. 172



How do you express **change**?
How do you relate learning to your **personal experience**?

Time markers
Verbs of seeing, thinking, feeling
Expressing relations

Bringing elements together

1. Can you locate these elements?

- Context
- Topic
- Main idea
- Expressions of change
- Responses to learning
- Conclusions

2. What are the uses of time markers?

3. How is the first person used?

What **I** found most intriguing **this week** was the **discussion on the male-female dichotomy within Spanish culture**.

I had always believed that **Spanish society is still very male-oriented** due to the influence of Catholicism and the Francoist return to institutionalised sexism.

However, **after** watching **Pedro Almodóvar's film *All about my mother*** **I realised** that **Spanish gender relations may be in flux**. The vivid and multifaceted personalities of the women portrayed in the film and the transgression of traditional gender roles were **a revelation** that **Spain has approached gender issues in a profound and culturally stimulating way**.

Acevedo-Muñoz's reading on how Almodóvar challenges male-female roles through the reimagining of Spanish cultural symbols (Acevedo-Muñoz 2003) **further confirmed my impression that Spain is actively revising its cultural traditions in a contemporary light**.

This week has made **me think about how different countries and cultures approach gender, not just within Spain**. **However, where did these ideas emerge? What cultural context is there for this gender disparity? I'd like to find out more.**