



# Rethinking reflective writing practices: From tried and tested tools to the challenges and opportunities of AI

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# Our context

- Research article writing course
- Credit-bearing elective
- Administered by Transferable Skills
- Multidiscipline, multilingual
- 8-12 students
- Coursework
- No official assessment
- 10-week
- Flipped
- Personalised



3 ECTS = 60-85 hours

See Deroey & Skipp, 2023

# Reflection as a super-power



- Reflexivity is a significant part of the doctoral experience, **maximising the learning potential** of the write-revise-reflect cycle (Boud et al. 1985).
  - Can **improve research-writing practice** (Williams et al. 2012)
  - **Intellectual** and **affective process** which leads to:
    - ✓ metacognitive insight
    - ✓ new understandings
    - ✓ critical thinking
    - ✓ problem-solving
- (Boud, Keogh, and Walker 1985; Costas et al. 2017)
- Promotes **continued professional development** (Deroey & Skipp 2023)

# Research questions

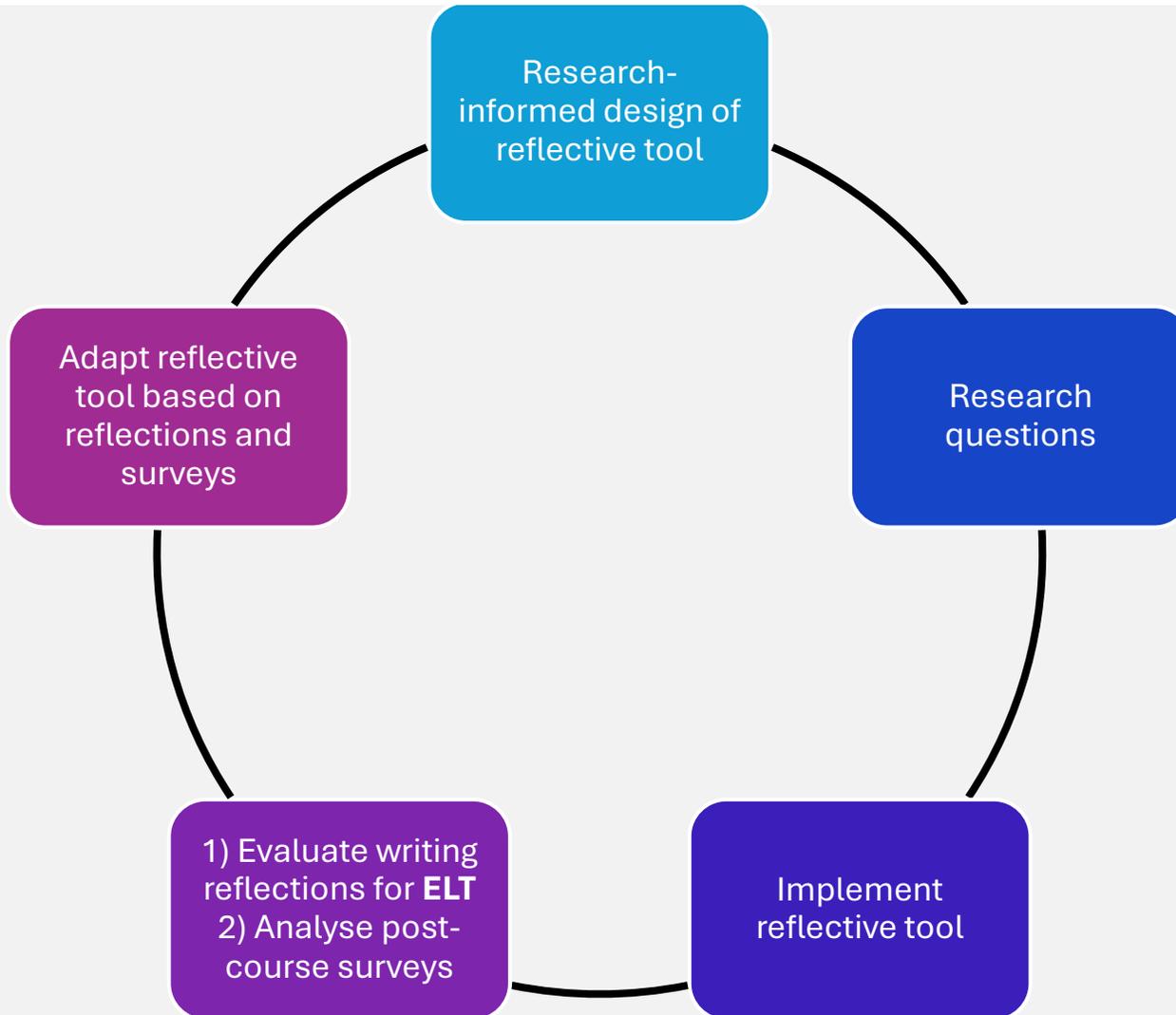
a) How can we optimise reflective tools to help our students to **develop** as research writers and academics?

b) How can we make the tool both **manageable** and **useful** to participants

But one that works with our multi-element course?



# Action-Research using Experiential Learning Theory (ELT)



Reflection-in-action

Reflection-on-action

Reflection-for-action



# Reflective journals: what we did

Date	Time (from -to)	What did you want to achieve? To what extent did you achieve these aims?	What issues did you have whilst writing?	Were you able to resolve those issues? If so, how?	If you were not able to resolve them, what do you plan to do to address them?	What questions do you still have?



# Reflective journals

## What we found



Reflection-for-action  
Affective commentary



Poorly rated in evaluations – 2.9/5  
Missing entries

“This is too complex and insanely demanding, with very little learning and improving benefit for the student in the end”. (WS20)

Reflection divorced from text – poor evidence-based reflection

## How and why we changed things

Increase reward for effort (Vilser et al, 2022)

Help students to see the connection between the text and their reflection

Changed to annotation of text + reflective paragraph

# In-text comments + reflection

## What we found



Strong reflection-in-action

More positive evaluation in surveys



50% - no reflective paragraph ->  
limiting reflective practice

Reflective paragraphs lacked specifics

Poor reflection-for-action

## How and why we changed things

Increase the opportunity for reflection-on and –for  
action through specific prompts

Illustrations of where and why changes occurred as  
evidence-based reflection



Use text annotation and narrative frames

# Narrative frames

Write or revise a c. 1000-word text using track changes/comment bubbles/any other annotation strategy to show what, how and why you have changed the writing or decided to write your text in this way. Copy and paste this text into this document. Then answer the questions below.

1. This text is a new text/ revision of a text (delete as necessary)
2. The key things I focused on in this text when writing or revising were mainly related to ..... because.....  
 On-action
3. Please highlight and comment on 3-6 examples from your text to show how you have worked on these elements.  
 In-action
4. What I have noticed by reflecting on this text is.....
5. This is useful for my writing in the future because.....  
 For-action
6. What I have not been able to resolve is.....

# Annotation and narrative frames

## What we found



More than one chance for evidence-based reflection-in- and –on-action

reflection-for-action - more varied comments

Rated highly useful in post-course surveys + comments on identity

BUT



Less about affective elements of writing

## Reflection within reflection

**Before I had not** made the connection as to why the disciplines of business management and organizations studies (BMOS) should *care about the historical context I am presenting*.

However, **now that I re-read it** when reflecting I think I could even work on it further by maybe *dividing it into two smaller sentences*

# Reflective-tool essentials

The reflective tool must be:

- Clear in why it is used and what benefit is for student
- Efficient to complete
- Perceived as satisfactory reward for the effort (Vilser et al, 2022)
- Integrated into course and process rather than an 'add-on'
- Suitable for students' needs
- Able to prompt affective engagement

→ CONTEXT IS KEY

# AI is now part of the context

## Adapting narrative frames

1. A section where I used AI was (provide excerpt) to provide ..... feedback (type of feedback requested).
2. The prompt(s) I used was/were .....
3. I asked for this feedback because.....
4. I find that the results from AI are.....
5. In future, when it comes to AI, I will.....

**How else could we incorporate AI into writing reflection?**

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