Critical reflection is an extension of "critical thinking". It asks us to think about our practice and ideas and then it challenges us to step-back and examine our thinking by asking probing questions.

Critical Reflection

Critical reflection is the process of analysing, reconsidering and questioning experiences within a broad context of issues (Murray, Kujundzic, 2005).

Four activities are central to critical reflection (Brookfield 1988):

**Assumption analysis** - This is the first step in the critical reflection process. It involves thinking in such a manner that it challenges our beliefs, values, cultural practices, and social structures in order to assess their impact on our daily proceedings. Assumptions are our way of seeing reality and to aid us in describing how the order of relationships.

**Contextual awareness** - Realizing that our assumptions are socially and personally created in a specific historical and cultural context.

**Imaginative speculation** - Imagining alternative ways of thinking about phenomena in order to provide an opportunity to challenge our prevailing ways of knowing and acting.

**Reflective skepticism** - Questioning of universal truth claims or unexamined patterns of interaction through the prior three activities - assumption analysis, contextual awareness, and imaginative speculation. It is the ability to think about a subject so that the available evidence from that subject's field is suspended or temporarily rejected in order to establish the truth or viability of a proposition or action.
A Critical Reflection Framework

A great deal of your time at university will be spent thinking;

- thinking about what people have said,
- what you have read,
- what you yourself are thinking
- how your thinking has changed.
- thinking process involves two aspects: reflective thinking and critical thinking.
- They are not separate processes; rather, they are closely connected (Brookfield 1987).


A critical incident reflection framework

The framework below is a guide for your own reflection and learning from events that have significance to you. The questions under each heading are “prompts” only. The framework is there to support you identify and develop options. There are no right or wrong responses although the overarching frames of “The what?”, “So what?” and “Now what?” are important components in a critical incident reflection.

**The what?**
A description of the incident/experience with just enough detail to support doing your “So what?” section. For example, description about who, what, why, when, where.

**So what?**
This is the sense-making section that asks you to surface general meaning, significance, your position / view point; actions; emotions (pre-during-post).

**Now what?**
This section makes connections from the experience / incident to further actions. For example, what would you do differently / the same next time? How come? What are key points, lessons learnt to share with your colleagues, network and/or group outside the network? (eg. idea, product, process, concept)? How will you do this?