Module 3: Additional Resource: How to write a reflective essay

Writing a reflective essay is a deeply personal process that will help you to develop new insights into your learning. If you want to improve your reflective essay writing skills, I encourage you to review [A complete guide to writing a reflective essayLinks to an external site.](https://www.oxbridgeessays.com/blog/complete-guide-to-writing-a-reflective-essay/) blog by OxbridgeEssays which provides an example outline for developing your essay and helpful tips.

For this class, your reflective essays will be longer (500 words) than[the example essay they provideLinks to an external site.](https://www.oxbridgeessays.com/blog/example-reflective-essay/). Below is an example of a 295-word essay that was built from their sample essay. In the Sample Essay you can observe the connections made to literature about the topic and the reflection. The references are cited using APA style and a full reference is listed below. This essay highlights insights from perceived missteps. Be aware that you can also draw lessons from your successes.

Sample Reflective Essay

       Fieldwork is an integral part of conducting research and my first-hand experience provided valuable insights. While the journey was generally enjoyable, I made mistakes that served as lessons for future endeavors. Conducting fieldwork in Rwanda, I realized the importance of incorporating primary research data into my study. However, due to a lack of available data on my topic, I utilized methodological triangulation, incorporating other sources of qualitative data to validate my findings, as suggested by Denzin (1970).

       To investigate the impact of urban policies on marginalized slum dwellers, I targeted two interviewee groups: government officials and slum dwellers. Elite interviews with government officials were semi-structured, utilizing open- and closed-ended questions. Scholars like Harvey (2011) advocate for this approach as it maximizes response rates and allows elites to articulate their views coherently. While I did not always have formal questions prepared, my familiarity with the topic enabled me to develop a natural rapport with respondents. Interview times varied, and some respondents offered data sets for consultation, although accessing desired data proved challenging.

      Building trust with slum dwellers was crucial, and my continuous presence at the research site fostered familiarity and participation. Hiring a local research assistant also enhanced my legitimacy in the eyes of potential respondents. While the data collection process was occasionally stressful and precarious, I learned resilience and how to maintain focus on meeting objectives. In hindsight, I should have changed my approach earlier, allocated less emphasis to the elite sample group, and prioritized data acquisition from secondary sources. Employing a local researcher earlier and providing more training would have improved the process.

       Overall, my fieldwork project taught me the significance of adaptability, perseverance, and effective planning. These lessons will  inform my future research endeavors and contribute to my overall growth as a researcher.

References

Denzin, N., 1970. *The Research Act in Sociology*, Chicago: Aldine.

Harvey, W.S., 2011. Strategies for conducting elite interviews. *Qualitative Researc*h, 11(4), pp. 431– 441. Available at: [http://qrj.sagepub.com/content/11/4/431.abstractLinks to an external site.](http://qrj.sagepub.com/content/11/4/431.abstract) [Accessed January 20, 2024].