

Samples of student reflections suggested by IB (from the “CAS Teacher Support Material”)

Note: Additional resources for introducing and developing abilities of students for meaningful reflection can be found in this TSM in Section four: Teaching strategies.

Written and verbal reflections are the most common ways students reflect. These are important methods; however, keep in mind that meaningful reflection can be expressed in various ways. Often, written reflection cannot express the depth of an experience in the way that visual, auditory or kinesthetic means of reflection can. Examples of student written reflection are included in this document.

Visual reflection can be accomplished through:

- photography
- painting
- animation
- sculpting/ceramics/mosaic
- prints
- textile and needlework.

Kinesthetic reflection can be accomplished through:

- dance
- theatre
- mime
- role play.

Auditory reflection can be accomplished through:

- lyrics
- rap
- jingle
- melodies.

By engaging in diverse forms of reflection, students may discover their preferred ways to reflect and integrate reflection by choice into their daily lives.

Teachers report unique ways students have presented their reflections

“Some students organized an impromptu 'flash mob' to commemorate their attendance at an annual Youth Leaders symposium. One of the art students then followed this up with a cartoon depiction of the event, which included caricatures of each student who had participated accompanied by speech bubbles with their individual comments on the flash mob experience and the symposium.”

“A student created a magic show as his choice for expressive, meaningful reflection. Challenges and surprises were represented by objects appearing out of hats, from behind ears and magically out of thin air. Similarly, items disappeared within an instant, representing challenges successfully met along his CAS journey. The magic show demonstrated the student’s passion for magic — his distinct talent — as well as a compilation of numerous skills and knowledge acquired during his time in the DP.”

“Following his involvement in a CAS project focusing on improving social justice, a student wrote two songs that acted as a culminating reflection. The student performed these songs in the school cafeteria, with an accompanying visual presentation that gave further details on his reflections and overall experience.”

“One of my students decided to take one photograph a week throughout her CAS experience that captured what she was feeling, thinking, seeing or learning. She combed through her photographs to create a gallery

without a single caption to present to the community. She wanted to see if what she saw through her camera lens would reflect the story accurately.”

“A student turned in a basketball to represent his reflection in Activity. All over the basketball he wrote phrases, attached photos, and adhered articles to repurpose the ball as a road map to his experience and represent his reflections.”

“Students who, as part of a CAS group project, were tutoring children within the Hmong community learned about the story quilts that are their traditional art form. They collaborated on a tapestry using learned skills from the Hmong artisans to tell about their collective journey.”

“A student decided to make a drawing on his growth process through CAS. Just with drawings we could understand how his experiences developed his self-identity.”

A series of written reflections by one student

17 February: I wouldn't say my football ability is terrible but I would like to improve on the skills I already have. During secondary school, I would occasionally play football, however, in my opinion, there was no real passion behind it. I played football just because I had to, however, over the given two year period, I've grown to the sport and began watching a lot more on television. This has driven me forward into building upon the skills I have into a better player overall. Also, this would help me keep fit and healthy while studying the IB. The first week, I filled in the midfield role to push for a 3-1 victory over the opposing team. Good start to a promising future I thought.

24 February: I decided I wanted to play the same role as I did during the first week. My reason for this was I knew some of the mistakes I had made during my debut match. For instance, in an attempt to pass the ball to one of the strikers as they were in on goal, I accidentally passed it off the pitch. This led to the opposing team getting a throw in and led to them getting a goal. Therefore, this time round, my aim for this week was to play the role I was 100% sure of and knew the limits to my abilities.

2 March: As I started the match on both first and second week, I did not want to be greedy and continue to be first pick. The main reason I believe I was first pick was purely based upon knowing friends that attended football on Friday. I took this time to stand on the side and observe those who played in the role midfield that I would normally be playing to see if they are doing anything different in comparison to me. I know that in any team sport it is essential to be cooperative and have good communication with the team. Saying this, I wanted to explore how important it was to be a communicative player in a team and therefore, at the beginning of next week, I shall be asking if I can play manager of the team rather than playing. This will allow me to see how the team interacts and able to communicate good strategies I may have come across.

9 March: This week went successfully I think. I had the privilege to manage the team which I found interesting. My plan was to observe the game and, during the second half, have a quick team talk about the positives and negatives. I called for a change in formation as I believed it would be more beneficial to the team if we played 1 striker but 5 midfielders instead. Fortunately, the strategy worked and we came out from a 2-1 lose during the first half to a 2-3 win for the students! What an intense game.

16 March: Getting picked for a starting position felt good again. Although previously I had really enjoyed the manager role, I think a big part of playing football every Friday is to maintain a high level of fitness and try to extrapolate as much both physical and mental skills as I can from the sport. Therefore, going back to the midfield role was fun and interesting as I could use the skills I had acquired from last session whilst playing in the game.

30 March: This week was not as exhausting as other weeks are for me as we ended up playing a five-a-side match due to a shortage of players. I could not gain much from the game and therefore once everyone decided to leave, me and friends stayed to play penalty shoot out. I found out during this week that there is a huge amount of pressure on one's shoulders.

Expressions of observations, thoughts and feelings by three different students

"I was just in town and standing in front of a store. A bearded man came by and politely asked another man who was passing by, 'Excuse me, can you help me?' This other man, much more affluent by the look of his clothes, replied in a very rude and abrupt tone, 'I don't have time for that right now!' and kept walking. I suppose he thought the bearded man was going to ask him for money. But that wasn't the case. After he stomped off this man turned to me and asked the same question. It turned out all he wanted was for someone to unclip a watch that was clipped to the back of his pack so he could go in and buy a battery for it. Not a huge request. I was glad to be able to help after the first man had treated him so rudely. This experience reminded me how important it is to stop, look, and listen.

"As one of my service experiences I wanted to help an elderly person as I realized that their problems are sometimes neglected or forgotten. That is why I turned to a nurse so that she could find a person in need of help and willing to be helped. I stayed in contact with the nurse and after a while she gave me the name and address of an old lady whom she described as lonely and having problems with walking. I was happy that I found the opportunity to offer my help to a person in need. On one day the nurse and I visited the elderly lady in her flat. Beforehand, the nurse informed me that the lady used to work physically and retired early (at the age of 45 due to health problems). I got acquainted with her and from that day on I started visiting her regularly once a week.

"I went for walks with the lady and every week we went shopping to the nearest supermarket. However, the most important task turned out to be far more difficult than I had expected. I made the greatest effort to make the woman cheerful, to create a friendly warm atmosphere, but I noticed how reserved and depressed she was. She mentioned the fact that she had been lonely for a long time and it stuck in my memory. It made me realize how loneliness affects human psyche.

"At the beginning I found it very difficult to make her smile, because she was only saying how miserable her life was and complained about the problems that she faced. I tried to show my understanding and convince her that life is worth living regardless of the difficulties one faces, but it seemed to me that it did not speak to her.

"Sometimes I wondered if my visits and help were bringing her anything good. Surprisingly, as time was passing by and we came to know each other better, I noticed a change in her and a change in the character of our interaction. I was very happy when on one day she confessed to me how grateful she was for my help. The experience gave me fulfillment and made me conceive how serious is the problem of loneliness in life and I realized the importance of attention that needs to be paid to lonely people.

"I have seen first-hand the harshness of the aging process. People who were once vibrant, bustling human beings are now confined and subdued by their deteriorating health. Jane has Parkinson's disease and is inhibited by her soft speech and inability to use her hands. I know from the time we have spent together that she has so much to say and many interests, but is slowed and sometimes stopped by her illness. Anne's only disease is effects of time and how it has affected her memory and hearing. Although she always recognizes me, Anne does not remember my name or hear much of what people say to her.

"As time went by, I began to realize that they had wonderful lives. Both have successful and large families, with interesting experiences throughout their lives. Now they are slowed down, but maybe because it is time for them to rest. I have learned a lot from them, about many things, but mostly about how to live with what you are given ... I hope when I am their age and in their situation like theirs that I can have their attitude—life is what it is and the best thing to do is accept it and be happy."

Student reflection through poetry

Let me not forget the memory of reunion.

Let me not forget the time, space, place, or the embrace.

The passing sound of suitcase wheels, interrupting announcements,

The ever growing feeling of relief, and love.

Let me not forget the moment when nothing else mattered,

Responsibilities, expectations, standards, pressure,

Slipping through my fingers as they wrap themselves in this reality.

Let me not forget the peaceful bliss as the tears glided down my cheeks;

Tears of joy, of content, of ecstatic happiness.

Let me not forget the fulfillment of those anticipating months.

Let me not forget that despite the previous distance, everything was renewed.

A friendship not worn by separation, but rather solidified in faith.

The faith that this moment would come, and would come many times again.

Let me not forget that some things can never be broken.

Let me not forget.