

EMPLOY101x RESOURCE 3.3.1

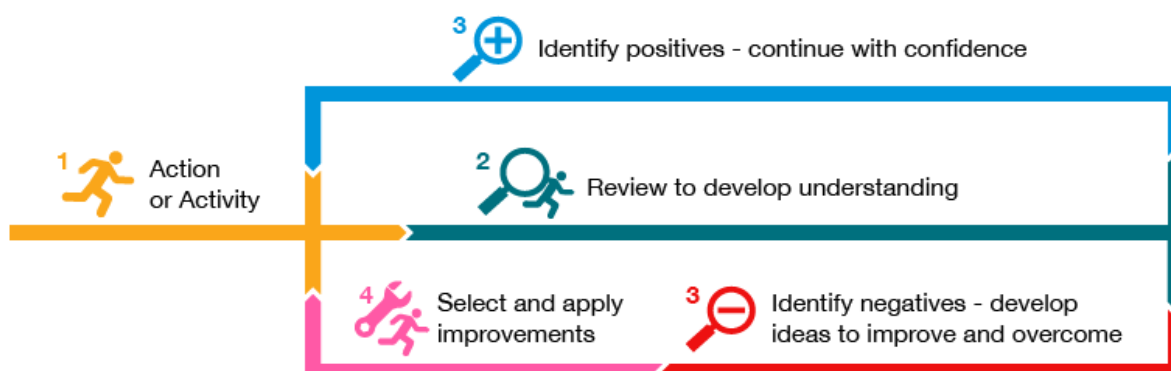


THE SEAL PROCESS OF SELF-REFLECTION FOR EMPLOYABILITY DEVELOPMENT

Experience alone is not enough for learning. To develop your employability you need to reflect on your experiences and understand the skills and attributes you have developed and how these will connect to your employability.

We have developed the SEAL process of self-reflection based on the concept of experiential learning which can be attributed to educational theorist, David Kolb. The basic idea behind experiential learning is that you take an activity and reflect on the outcomes, both positive and negative, and determine how to behave in the future. Do you adjust your behaviour for a better outcome or do you 'continue with confidence', as the diagram below shows?

Basically, the point of self-reflection is for improvement, or to identify where you can do something well, so you can behave in the same way in the future. This is particularly important for employability development as before you think about listing your skills and attributes on a resume, you need to go through a process of self-awareness through reflection to understand what it is that you can do and how you might contribute to an organisation.



Example:

Take a situation where your workmate at your part time job doesn't do their share of work and this frustrates you.

1. Action/activity: You have a heated exchange with your workmate.
2. Review to develop understanding: Your action results in both of you receiving a reprimand from your manager.
3. Identify positives or negatives: The negatives are easily identifiable in this situation. You recognise that this action did not give you the outcome you were looking for, therefore you consider how else you could have handled the situation.
4. Select and apply improvements: You come up with another way to talk to your workmate if the situation arises again.

If you encounter this problem again, you apply the new strategy and if this results in a more favourable outcome, you know you can continue with confidence, that is you will use the strategy in the future.

If again you fail to achieve a positive outcome, you go through the cycle again, until you come up with a strategy that DOES WORK!

THE SEAL PROCESS OF SELF REFLECTION

The key to learning from your experiences is to reflect on them. We have developed a useful process for self-reflection which we call SEAL. It stands for:

SITUATION: What was the new experience or challenge you faced and what happened to you?

EFFECT: What impact did it have on you and what were the consequences of this impact?

ACTION: What action did you take to deal with the new situation and any challenges, and why did you do this?

LEARNING: What did you learn from the experience and how will you apply this in the future?

This process steps you through a situation that you may have faced as part of an experience, such as dealing with a difficult customer during part time work in a café. It allows you to break down the situation and consider why it was challenging and what you did to handle the challenges (or just that you hadn't been in that situation before). Most importantly, it gives you a framework for understanding what you have learned.

Once you have mastered the use of SEAL, you can apply it to any situation you have faced, both as a student and once you are professional in your field.

Something to note:

With SEAL, the effect of the situation can be about actual consequences or just how you feel about that particular effect. For example, if you over-react in a meeting, you may feel embarrassed by your actions (the effect of the situation) but the actual consequence may be that the discussion is derailed or your colleagues may start viewing you as someone who is difficult to work with.

You may also feel that perhaps you were faced with a difficult situation that you didn't handle well, or that the actions you took didn't result in a solution or a better way of doing things. As the diagram above shows, if the outcome is negative, this is your opportunity to improve. Hopefully, no matter what, you will have gained a better understanding of yourself from reflecting on the experience. Take the learning, even if you don't think it is significant, and use it to guide your actions in the future or to consider how you might do things differently.