A workbook

practising

reflection

Tools for students and early career practitioners in Museums, Galleries and Heritage

A note from the team

The reflective process is used in many fields. However, in the Museum, Gallery and Heritage sector, it is becoming increasingly important to consider how your actions impact and frame your work, your audiences, and an organisation's activity. This simple workbook introduces different ways to reflect to encourage and support students of Museum, Gallery and Heritage Studies (MGH) in their reflective learning and practice.
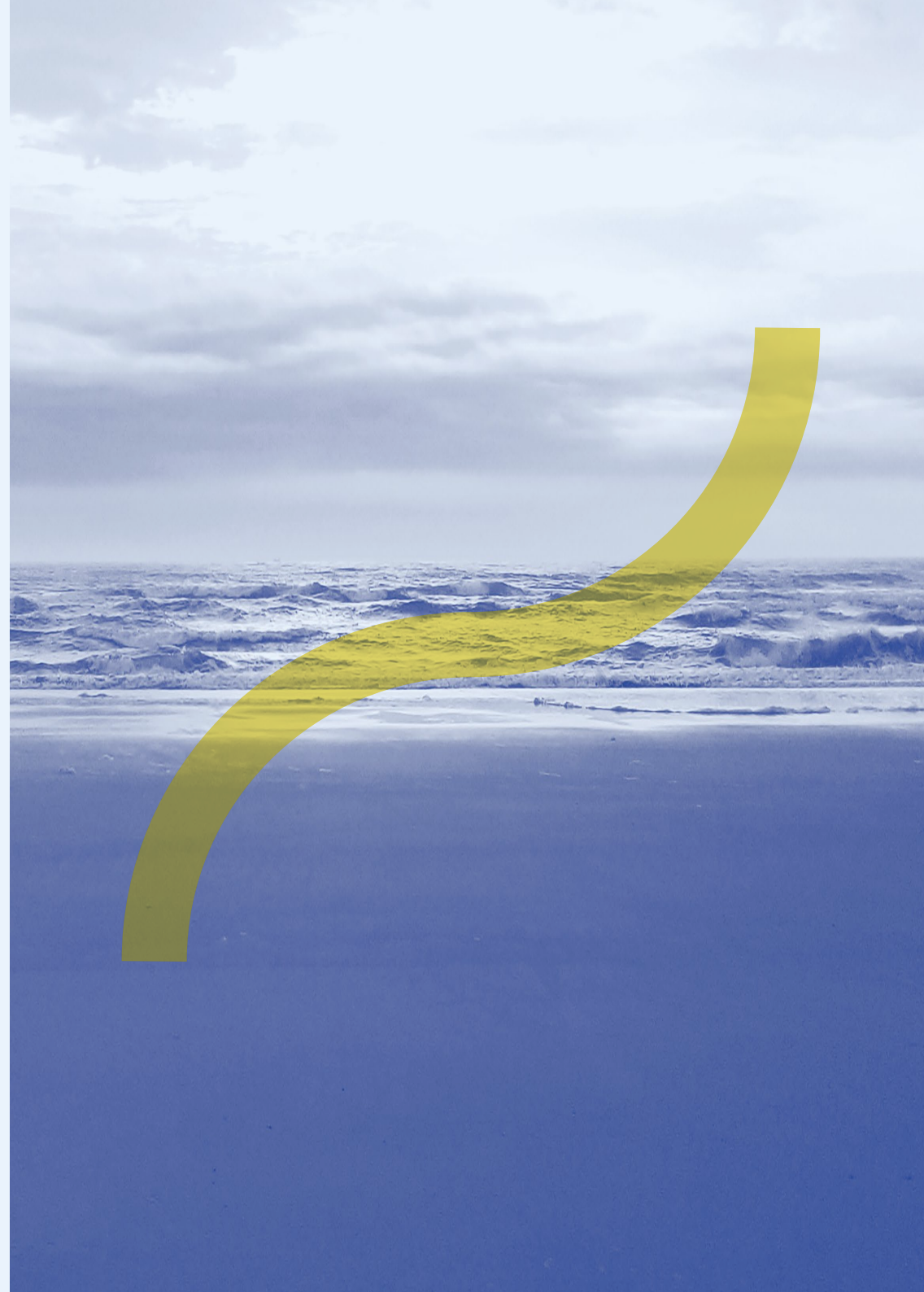
Co-designed by students on the MGH courses at Newcastle University, the workbook contains tools and prompts that you can use to aid reflection in different situations. These tools can be used in any order and at any point in a project or process. During the design process, the co-design team was particularly motivated by the idea that individual and collective reflection can encourage and support positive change, both in the present and the future.

There are four exercises in the workbook. The first two exercises are valuable aids for personal reflection, and you can do them as an individual. The second two exercises can be used for personal reflection. They can also be used in collaborative contexts with peers or project participants.

The workbook also includes a double-sided pullout. If you're new to reflection, you might like to start with it as an easing-in activity. The pullout unfolds to a poster; on one side it depicts visual representations of the reflective processes of the co-design team. These give a flavour of how reflection can happen in myriad ways and might provide a useful starting point for thinking about your own reflective processes. On the other side you are prompted to depict your way of reflecting as an individual or within a project team. You might decide to put the poster on your wall (or the project team's pinboard) to remind you to make time for reflection in your everyday activities.

There is a common understanding that reflection happens at the end of a project. Still, this workbook could be a helpful prompt to think about reflection at the start, or in the middle, of an experience or project. It could be used on your own or in a collaborative setting.

The workbook design is deliberately spacious, with plenty of room for you to expand our prompts. We hope that it will be an aid in the preparation of reflective report assignments as well as support your reflective practice beyond your studies.

Building reflection into your weekly routine

Use this exercise to introduce short times of reflection and learning about yourself in your everyday routines and your interactions with peers.

Monday: Try something different today, like taking a walk outside. When you return, think back and write down what you noticed about the experience.

Thursday: Share your thoughts and feelings from yesterday with your friends. Did you have anything in common? How did it feel?

Tuesday: Have a chat with your classmates today. What did you talk about? Can you summarise the key points? Did you learn anything? If so, what?

Friday: Yay! You made it through! Look back on the week that passed. What do you feel you have gained from this?

Wednesday: Take a breath and slow down. You've reached the middle. How are you feeling today?

Where do you go from here?

Believe in yourself

Using reflection to make the most of theory and knowledge

Use this exercise to help understand a new concept and how it may (or may not) have changed the way you think about the subject.

1 **What have I learned?**

What did I already know?

2 **How has this contributed to my professional/theoretical knowledge of the subject at hand?**

3 **Has it changed the way I think about a particular theory/idea?**
Take a couple of minutes to sit and think before writing anything down.
When you're ready, use the space below to write down if anything has changed. If you are having trouble, look at the questions below to kick-start your critical thinking.

What were my thoughts on the subject before this exercise?

Has the new concept changed the way I think? How?

In what ways (if any) has my thinking changed?

If it didn't change how I think/ feel - why is that?

Reflecting with TAR

Use this exercise to create a reflective practice rhythm for an individual or collaborative project. Write, doodle, draw, stick in pictures - whatever you feel is helpful and captures this moment.

We can be so busy with a project or wrapped up in a situation that we don't make time to pause, step back and assess the situation. However, it can be useful at points throughout a project or situation to take a breath, check in with how we are feeling and think about how it's going.

Take a step back   **A**ssess the situation   **R**espond

Assess the situation

What is the situation/task?
Are you happy? Unhappy? Why?
What is positive about the place you are at?

Respond

What would make the situation better?
What would make it more productive?

Reflecting through past experiences

Use this exercise to incorporate past experiences in reflection, either individually or with others.

Write a summary of the situation you want to reflect upon. Give a description of what happened.

what is your situation?

Thinking through that past experience, what do you know now that can help to process or make sense of your current situation?

apply your experience

reflect on a related past experience

Can you think of a similar experience you, or someone you know, had in the past?

What happened?

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