

Theme 2: How do I reflect on my experiences to develop my employability?

Learning goals:

1. To translate experiences into employability using a reflection process (SEAL) to reflect on and identify learning
2. To understand how to bring all your experiences together to consider your overall employability (narrative)

Stage of study:

In the middle years of a program, when students are engaged in a range of experiences on and off campus, they may be undertaking work experience or placements, and they are encouraged to reflect on their experiences.

Key messages:

- Being effective in your work largely comes from developing the capabilities and attributes that guide performance and social interactions. These things are not easily learned 'from a textbook' – they are best developed through experience.
- Experience alone is not sufficient for development – students need to reflect on learning and consider how they will apply that learning in the future.
- SEAL provides a structured approach to reflection. It stands for Situation, Effect, Action, Learning. Apply the process to specific situations that were new or challenging and use the Learning part of the process to identify skills, capabilities and attributes. The process can be seen in action in these [SEAL examples](#).
- Once you have identified the learning you've gained from your experiences, you can bring everything together and consider your overall employability (your narrative). This is part of forming your identity as an early career professional. Remember that it is not about what you **have** (a toolkit of skills) but what you **are** as a person and the contribution you can make to society and the economy through work.

Instructional videos:

Realising your employability narrative - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KNFYfCAXrFI> (3:31 mins)

Identifying new experiences and their challenges - https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=7&v=bkLoN6kX84c (6:03 mins)

The value of self-reflection – https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uY_forXKJUk (6.22 mins)

A student example of using SEAL: Emma – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sC0UaWn8DTg> (7.25 mins)

Emma identifying learning (follows on from the previous video) - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9hlh6ded3YM> (1:37 mins)

Activities:

1. Using the [learning opportunity](#) diagram, have students consider new and challenging situations and determine whether they were learning opportunities.
2. Using Resource [3.2.3](#) and [3.2.4](#), explain the characteristics of good reflective writing and use the activity at Resource [3.2.5](#) to test understanding.
3. Practise using the [SEAL process](#) to self-reflect using the template and the [rubric](#) to assess reflections. Have students identify the skills, capabilities and attributes they have developed by examining the Learning part of SEAL and consider those things in terms of their beginning professional identity. Ask the question: what kind of employee do you think you could be?
4. Using the [planning form](#), have students plan their employability narrative. You could then ask them to use it to answer the interview question "Tell me about yourself?" in role plays as interviewee and prospective employer.

Detailed explanation of the SEAL process can be [found here](#).

Further information:

More information on this topic including activities and additional videos can be found at <http://itali.uq.edu.au/employ101x-staff-resources> for topics 3 and 5.