

Health Systems Science 2

Module 7 Reflection

Guidelines

This worksheet will be used to guide your reflection of Block 4. Remember that at the end of each module, you have been asked to complete a reflection, which contributes to your e-Portfolio of Learning. For this activity, you will reflect on Modules 7. Here is what you need to do:

- Part 1: Learning outside the classroom
- Part 2: Being an agent for change



Part 1: Learning outside the classroom

Even though we work through a lot of theoretical content in class and in tutorials, it is always important to relate what you learn to your lived experience outside of the classroom. This could take many forms: it could be a conversation you over hear while traveling home that gets you to think about things differently; it could be a conversation you have with friends from other programmes who share their experiences and you notice that some ideas you have been learning about apply to that situation; it could be a webinar or in-person seminar you joined because you were interested in the topic; or even an exhibition, theatre piece, novel or series that you've been watching.

As an HSS student, you are invited to partake in many events on campus such as the Botlhale-Orenstein Lecture. You are also given links to interesting articles and YouTube videos, all with a focus on health and health systems.

Think back to some of these events or to your own personal experiences. Reflect on how your learning outside of the classroom has helped your understanding of HSS content to coalesce:

Throughout Module 7, my understanding of South Africa's health system deepened as I explored the realities of service delivery, community health, and the challenges faces in providing equitable care. I was able to deeply analyse the interventions that are trying to be implemented and how in theory they are viable solutions yet how the realities of the forces that are steering our health care systems prevent these interventions from working. Learning outside of the classroom played a crucial role in shaping this understanding. Living in Honehill, Johannesburg (a quiet, well-resources area with predominantly older white residents) made me more aware of the stark contrast between my environment and the realities of underserved communities I researched and learned about. Conversations with peers from other faculties and community members, and the content I learned in Public Health, also helped me connect theory to lived experience. For example, when discussing healthcare access and affordability, I began to see how social and economic privilege influences people's ability to seek and maintain care. Watching documentaries and attending health-related seminars further helped me appreciate the complexity of service delivery and the importance of collaboration between government, communities, and healthcare professionals. These experiences outside the classroom reinforced key themes of health equity, system responsiveness, and the social determinants of health

which are concepts that became more tangible and personal through real-world observation.

From these experiences, I developed several key competencies. I strengthened my critical thinking by analysing how structural inequalities manifest in healthcare access. I also honed my communication and collaboration skills through group discussions and debates, learning how to respectfully engage with diverse perspectives and back up my arguments with evidence. My cultural competence and empathy grew as I reflected on the different contexts people come from and how cultural understanding can improve patient-centred care (a vital part of the STEEEP framework). Moreover, I improved my systems thinking by learning to see health not just as a biological issue, but as something influenced by governance, policy, and community dynamics. I also developed a stronger sense of ethical awareness, recognising the moral responsibility that comes with working in health systems where resource allocation and service delivery impact real lives.



Part 2: Being an Agent for Change



Many of the topics that were covered in Module 7 have to do with issues related to Service Delivery. There is also a focus on community health, rural health, and meeting the needs of underserved communities. Reflect on what role you see yourself playing as a possible agent for change. This can be how you see yourself in your capacity as a health science student, or the role you see yourself playing in the near future. Discuss how you can put your ideas into effect.

As an aspiring healthcare professional, I now see myself as an agent of change who can help advocate for stronger, fairer health systems in South Africa. Module 7 taught me that change begins with awareness, but grows through actions and collaboration. In the future, I hope to contribute by promoting health education in communities, supporting policies that prioritise rural and underserved populations, and fostering inclusivity in healthcare spaces.

As a former Biomedical Science student who now has Health System Sciences knowledge, I can put these ideas into effect by participating in outreach initiatives, joining student-led health campaigns, and continuing to raise awareness about health inequalities. My goal is to use both scientific knowledge and the humanistic principles of Health Systems Science to bridge the gap between theory and impact and ensuring that healthcare is not only available but also just, compassionate, and sustainable for all South Africans.