APO Centre of Excellence for Business Excellence
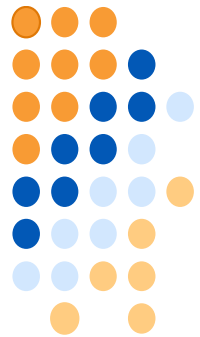
BUSINESS EXCELLENCE ASSESSOR TRAINING MANUAL

Assessor Workbook

Contents

Getting Started

About this Workbook

What's the purpose of this workbook?

The Assessor Training programme prepares Assessors for the Independent Review using a case study.   Practice sessions using the 6-Step Evaluation Process are used to refresh and deepen Assessor Criteria knowledge, evaluation skills and comment writing skills.

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Training Schedule

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DAY 1

Time	Module
10 min	**1. Course Objectives**
20 min	**2. Assessor Competencies**
1.5 hours	**3. Business Excellence Framework**
30 min	**4. Independent Review**
30 min	**5. Introduction to the 6-Step Evaluation Process**
60 min	**6. Identifying Key Factors – Group Exercise 1**
2.5 hours	**7. Evaluating Process Items – Group Exercise 2:**
15 min	**Closing**

DAY 2

Time	Module
15 min	**Opening**
3 hours	**8. Evaluating Results Items – Group Exercise 3**
3 hours	**9. Evaluating Process Items – Individual Exercise 4**
15 min	**Closing**

DAY 3

Time	Module
15 min	**Opening**
2 hours	**10. Identifying Key Themes – Group Exercise 5**
2 hours	**11. Conducting Site Assessments**
1 hour	**12. Assessor Code of Conduct**
1 hour	**Reflection & Closing**

Getting Ready to Learn

Opening

Why are we here?
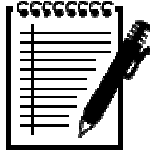
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Ground Rules for Learning in a Group

Learning is a social process
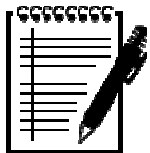
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1. Course Objectives

After completing this training, assessors will be able to:

- Apply the Criteria requirements to the case study
- Apply the 6-Step Evaluation process to the application review process
- Write feedback comments that add value to the applicant and meet the Comment Guidelines
- Identify opportunities for development of assessor competencies

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2. Assessor Competencies

Learning Objective

At the end of this module participants will be able to articulate the five core competencies required of a professional and competent assessor.

Assessor Feedback on Competencies

The purpose and goal of this activity is to reinforce the competencies and strengths the assessor already has and to explore alternatives to competencies the assessor wants to do better or develop.

1. What are (my/the assessor's) strengths?

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2. What do (I/the assessor) need to develop?

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3. What steps can (I/the assessor) take to develop these skills?

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4. What questions do I still need answered?

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	Examiner's Performance Level		
	Entry *With Guidance* ⟶	**Competent** *Independently* ⟶	**Expert** *Independently*
Job Aids	• Uses evaluation tools & Step-by-Step instructions • Knows the resources available in the relevant Business Excellence website • Works with guidance of a team leader	• Uses current evaluation tools • Adapts Step-by-Step instructions to own personal style • Works independently	• Provides guidance • Demonstrates cycles of improvement in adapting the Step-by-Step instructions
Criteria	• Applies knowledge of Criteria (Categories, Items, Scoring Guidelines)	• Sequentially relates applicant's Item responses to the Criteria, Key Factors, Core Values and other Items • Uses in-depth understanding of the Criteria intent	• When reading application, makes connections within application and to linkages in the Criteria, Key Factors and Key Themes • Demonstrates how the Criteria offer value to the specific applicant
Award Application	• Identifies elements of an application • Matches response to the Criteria requirement • Describes the organisation	• Recognises misplaced responses • Recognises evidence to support strengths and opportunities	• Makes initial assessments and evaluates applicant's maturity levels • Identifies value creation and leveraging on opportunities for applicant • Builds support for cross-cutting and other themes
Key Factors	• Selects Key Factors relevant to Item requirements	• Selects Key Factors within the context of the application	• Applies business acumen & sector knowledge when selecting relevant key factors • Develops key factors that combine data from Organisational Profile & relevant documents to highlight areas of potential leverage
Strengths & Opportunities for Improvement	• Interprets facts, including comparing and contrasting them within individual items • Provides sufficient information to enable writing of comment	• Observes patterns & makes connections • Identifies strengths & opportunities • Prioritises relevant & important feedback • Assesses risk to applicant of not meeting Criteria requirements	• Develops a new thought by relating knowledge from different areas • Develops statements that demonstrate the systems perspective of the business excellence framework • Develops statements supporting key themes

3. Business Excellence Framework

Learning Objectives

At the end of this module participants will be able to:

- Describe the value of the business excellence framework
- Highlight features of two widely used models
- Explain the core values underpinning the framework
- List the key requirements for each of the categories
- Describe the scoring dimensions and evaluation factors

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4. Award Process & Independent Review

Learning Objectives

At the end of this module participants will be able to:
- List the components of the Award Process and
- List the steps in the Independent Review Process
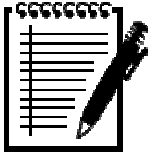
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5. 6-Step Evaluation Process

Learning Objectives

At the end of this module participants will be able to:
- Outline the 6 steps of the Item evaluation process and link it to the Independent Review process
- Describe the focus of each of the six-steps

Capture your notes here.

6. Identifying Key Factors – Exercise 1

Learning Objectives

At the end of this module participants will be able to:

- Explain what key factors are and how they help to focus the assessment
- Describe where key factors may be found in the application
- Identify key factors relevant to the applicant
- Provide examples and non-examples of key factors

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7. Evaluating Process Items - Exercise 2

Learning Objectives

At the end of this module participants will be able to:

- Gain a shared understanding of the 6-Step Process in evaluating a Process Item.
- Explain the key concepts of each of the 6 steps of the evaluation process.

How the 6-Step Evaluation Process Guides
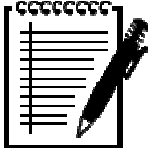
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Step 1:   Review the Criteria
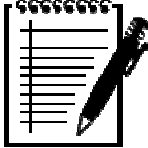
The focus of this step is to become grounded in the Criteria

Capture your notes here.

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Step 2:   Select 4 - 6 key factors

- The focus of this step is to identify the interdependence of the key factors with the Criteria key concepts and what we know about the applicant.

- Pick one key factor and discuss how it might influence the applicant's operations in this Item.

- Record each of the key factors.

Capture your notes here.

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Step 3:   Read the Application

The focus of this step is to understand the applicant's operations and how the applicant's response relates to its key factors and the Criteria requirements. Discuss your individual understanding of the applicant's operations. How are these important?

Capture your notes here.

Step 4:   Identify around 6 strengths and/or OFI's

The focus of this step is to capture your insights in the form of strength and OFI statements and to support those insights with evidence.

• Review the evidence presented and the gaps identified.

• Write a brief statement for the most important strengths and OFI's.

• Provide supporting evidence for each statement.

• Record the 6 statements and supporting evidence on chart paper.

• Capture statements on chart.

Capture your notes here.

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Step 5:   Write 2 Feedback-ready Comments.

The focus of this step is to convert the value-added insights identified into a narrative sentence.

Capture comments on a chart.

Capture your notes here.

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Comment Guidelines

Content Guidelines	**Do**
	• Address your comments to the basic, overall, or multiple Criteria requirements that are most important to the applicant.
	• Write a unified, coherent, well-developed comment to provide value to the applicant. Include a topic sentence to express the main point of the comment, followed by concisely written evidence that develops the main idea in greater detail. *(Hint: Reach a conclusion and write it first, moving from generalization to support.)*
	• Include factual supporting detail. Ask yourself, "What examples can I provide from the applicant's response to clarify the strength or opportunity?" Include figure numbers in comments, as appropriate. You do not, however, need to construct an exhaustive list of every method described by the applicant that is related to your conclusion.
	• Use the evaluation factors (approach, deployment, learning, and integration [ADLI] or levels, trends, comparisons, and integration [LeTCI]) to clearly articulate the areas of strength or to provide insights that will help the applicant improve overall organizational effectiveness and capabilities.
	• Draw linkages across Items or between an Item and the applicant's Organizational Profile.
	• Ensure that the comment does not contradict other comments in the same Item or other Items or in the Key Themes Worksheet.
	Do not
	• Go beyond the requirements of the Criteria or assert your personal opinions.
	• Be prescriptive by using "could," "should," or "would."
	• Be judgmental by using terms such as "good," "bad," or "inadequate."
	• Comment on the applicant's style of writing or data presentation.

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Style Guidelines	**Do** • Use a polite, professional, and positive tone. • Use active voice (e.g., "completes" rather than "is completed") and present tense. • Use vocabulary/phraseology from the Criteria and the Scoring Guidelines. • Describe what is missing if something "is not clear." • Use "the applicant" (which will be replaced with the actual name in the final product) and generic terms such as "the organisation," "the hospital," or "the school district" to avoid repetition in comments. • Use the applicant's terminology when appropriate. **Do not** • "Parrot" the application or the Criteria. Provide only enough language to add clarity—seek to add value rather than restate information. • Use jargon or acronyms unless they are used by the applicant.
Consensus Review Worksheet Guidelines	**Do** • Include four to six key factors based on the Criteria requirements for the Item. These will differ depending on the Item. Include only the relevant portion of the key factor (e.g., one or two of the strategic challenges rather than all strategic challenges). • Include a total of around six comments per Item that are most relevant and important to the applicant based on its key factors and its maturity level as seen in the evaluation factors (ADLI or LeTCI). • Ensure that the Item's score is supported by the comments. • Place the comment on the correct Consensus Review Worksheet based on the Criteria, not on where the information appears in the application. • Place the comments on the Consensus Review Worksheet in the order of importance to the applicant, not necessarily in Criteria order.

Step 6: Determine the Range and the% score

The intent of this step is to find the most descriptive scoring range for this Item, keeping in mind the importance of your strengths and OFIs to the applicant based on, the Criteria requirements and its key factors.

- Using the appropriate Scoring Guidelines-Process or Results select the most descriptive range.

- How well do the descriptors align with the statements and comments.

- Why is this range the most descriptive range?

- Capture the scoring range and score on a chart

Capture your notes here.

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Points to Remember

Facilitator Report-Out
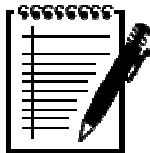
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Reflection

Purpose

The purpose of this section is to reinforce the day's work and reflect.

- What did you learn?

- What are your strengths?

- What do you need to do differently or develop?

- What questions do you still need answered?

- What are your next steps?

Capture your notes here.

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Day 1 Wrap-Up

Announcements

Recap Day 1

Capture your notes here.

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Day 2 Opening

Recap Day 1

Preview Day 2

Capture your notes here.

8. Evaluating Results Items – Exercise 3

Learning Objectives

At the end of this module participants will be able to:

- Gain a shared understanding of the 6-Step Process in evaluating a Results Item.
- Explain the key concepts of each of the 6 steps of the evaluation process.

Overview

The purpose of this module is to repeat the 6-Step Evaluation process among the assessors at a table, this time evaluating a Results Item.

Time

3 hours

Step 1:   Review the Criteria

The focus of this step is to become grounded in the Criteria

Locate Item 7.4 in your Criteria booklet.

- Discuss the key concepts for Item 7.4 with your group.

- Discuss these insights and how they might influence your eventual evaluation of this item.

Capture your group's ideas here.

Step 2:   Select 4 - 6 key factors

- Select 4-6 key factors using the pre-work completed

- Pick one key factor and discuss how it might influence the organisation's operations relevant to this Item.

Capture the key factors selected by your group.

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Step 3:   Read the Application

The focus of this step is to develop insight into the applicant's operations and their relationship to their key factors and the Criteria requirements.

Discuss:

• What insights do you have?

• Are your insights new to the applicant?

• Are your insights important? Why or why not?

• What is missing in its response that may be important to the applicant?

Capture your group's ideas here.

## Step 4:   Identify around 6 strengths and/or OFI's

The focus of this step is to capture your insights in the form of Strengths and OFI's and to support those insights with evidence

Capture you group's statements and evidence here.

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Step 5:   Write 2 Feedback-ready Comments

The focus of this step is to convert the value-added insights that you have identified to a narrative sentence.
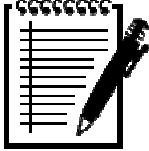
Capture your group's comments here.

Step 6:   Determine the range % score

The intent of this step is to find the most descriptive scoring range for this Item given the importance to the applicant, the Criteria requirements, and the key factors.

- Using the appropriate Scoring Guidelines, Process or Results, select the most descriptive range.

- How well do the descriptors align with the statements and comments.
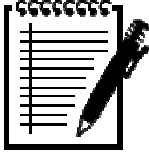
- Why is this range the most descriptive range?

Capture your group's range and score here.

Facilitator Report Out

Points to Remember

Capture your notes here.

9. Evaluating Process Items – Exercise 4

Learning Objectives

At the end of this module participants will be able to work independently to gain understanding of the 6-Step Process in evaluating a different Criteria item (Process)

Goal

The purpose of this module is to apply the 6-Step process to another Criteria Item (Process item). This time each Assessor will work independently.

Time

2.5 hours

Step 1:   Review the Criteria

The focus of this step is to become grounded in the Criteria.

- Locate Item x.x in your Criteria booklet.

- Determine the key concepts in Item x.x.

- Consider how the Criteria requirements might influence your eventual evaluation of this item.

Capture your notes here.

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Step 2:   Select 4 - 6 Key Factors

The focus of this step is to identify the interdependence of the key factors with the Criteria key concepts and what we know about the applicant

• Select 4 – 6 key factors.

• Consider how each key factor might influence applicant's operations in this Item.
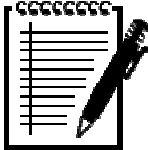
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Step 3:   Read the Application.

The focus of this step is to develop insight into the applicant's operations and their relationship to their key factors and the Criteria requirements.

- What insights do you have?

- Are these insights that will be new to the applicant?

- Are they important? Why or why not?

- What is missing in the response that might be important to the applicant?

Capture your thoughts here.

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Step 4:   Identify around 6 Strengths and/or OFIs.

The focus of this step is to capture your insights in the form of Strengths and OFI's and to support those insights with evidence

- Review the evidence presented and the gaps identified.

- Write a brief statement for the most important strengths and OFI's.

- Provide supporting evidence for each statement.

Step 5:   Write 2 Feedback-ready Comments

The focus of this step is convert the value-added statement that you have identified to a narrative sentence.

Write a feedback ready comment for one strength and one OFI.

Capture your comments on the worksheet.

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Step 6:   Determine the Range and the % score

The intent of this step is to find the most descriptive scoring range for this Item given the importance to the applicant, the Criteria requirements, and the key factors.

• Using the appropriate Scoring Guidelines, Process or Results, select the most descriptive range.

• How well do the descriptors align with the statements and comments.

• Why is this range the most descriptive range?

Enter your range and % score on the worksheet.

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Paired Feedback

Review your partners comments and provide verbal feedback.

As you read, consider

- Do the comments reflect the most relevant and important Criteria requirements and why?
- Do the comments reflect the most relevant and important key factors and why?
- Is this the most relevant and important feedback for the applicant and why?
- Are the comments reflective of the individual IR worksheets?

Use the Comment Guidelines to review your partner's comments and make notes for feedback.

Read the comment as if you were the applicant. Would you understand:

- the comment?
- why it is important?
- how to improve as an organization?

Paired Feedback continued
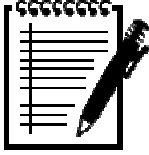
Capture your feedback notes here.

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Provide Feedback

Based on your review, provide constructive feedback to your partner.

• What did he/she do well?

• What could he/she do better?

Day 2 - Wrap Up

Announcements

Recap Day 2

Capture your notes here.

Day 3 Opening

Recap Day 2

Preview Day 3

Capture your notes here.

10. Identifying Key Themes

Learning Objectives

At the end of this module participants will be able to:

- Define and explain key themes
- Outline the steps in developing key themes
- Describe the sources of key themes e.g. using Core Values, Approach-deployment items and Results Items
- Provide examples and non-examples of key themes
- Develop key themes for a given case-study

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11. Identifying Key Themes – Exercise 5

Objective

The objective of this exercise is to develop key themes for the given case study.

Time

1.5 hours

Guidelines:

- Organise your worksheet into 4 sections to address the following (a) process strengths (b) process opportunities (c) results strengths and (d) results opportunities

- Write complete sentences that adhere to the Comment Guidelines

- Include robust evidence that adds clarity and value for applicants without parroting the application

Each group to capture on flip-chart.

Group representative to make a presentation.

Points to Remember

Facilitator Report-Out

Capture your notes here.

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11. Conducting Site Assessments

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Learning Objectives

At the end of this module participants will be able to:
- Explain the objectives of conducting site assessments.
- Outline the steps in conducting site assessments
- Describe the types of evidence obtained from site assessments
- Explain the challenges in conducting site assessments
- Describe the factors for an effective site assessment

Goal

The purpose of this module is to understand the objectives of site assessments and the steps in conducting site assessments.

Time

2 hours

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12. Assessor Code of Conduct

Learning Objectives

At the end of this module participants will be able to:
- List the four principles guiding ethical conduct during an assessment
- Explain each of the principles that guide assessors in committing to high standards of ethical conduct

The purpose of this module is to reinforce the principles that guide the assessor in fulfilling responsibilities as a Business Excellence Assessor committed to high standards of public service and ethical conduct.

Time

60 min

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Code of Ethical Conduct

Members of the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award Board of Examiners pledge to uphold their professional principles in the fulfillment of their responsibilities as defined in the administration of Public Law 100-107, the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Improvement Act of 1987, which establishes the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award.

Board members will be guided by four principles: **integrity, professional conduct, confidentiality, and respect for intellectual property**.   In promoting high standards of public service and ethical conduct, they will

- conduct themselves professionally, guided by truth, accuracy, fairness, respect, and responsibility in all their interactions
- avoid representing conflicting or competing interests, or placing themselves in such a position where their interest may be in conflict—or appear to be in conflict—with the purposes and administration of the Award
- safeguard the confidences of all parties involved in the judging or examination of present or former applicants
- protect confidential information and avoid disclosures that may in any way influence the Award integrity or process, currently or in the future
- not serve any private or special interest in their fulfillment of the duties of a Judge or Examiner, therefore excluding by definition the examination of any organization or subunit of an organization that employs them or has a consulting arrangement in effect or anticipated with them
- not serve as Examiners of a primary competitor or customer or supplier of any organization (or subunit of an organization) that employs them, that they have a financial interest in, or with which they anticipate a consulting arrangement, or are otherwise involved
- not intentionally communicate false or misleading information that may compromise the integrity of the Award process or decisions therein
- make it clear, when establishing links from their own Web sites to the NIST or BNQP Web sites, that users will be taken to the official NIST Web sites
- acknowledge the use of trademarks owned by NIST, including those for NIST, The Quest for Excellence, and the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award, along with a statement indicating the trademark is registered by the National Institute of Standards and Technology
- never approach an organization they have evaluated for their personal gain, including the establishment of an employment or consulting relationship, and, if approached by an organization they have evaluated, not accept employment from that organization for a period of five years after the evaluation
- maintain and safeguard fairness in the examination process and the confidentiality of all Award application information, including the identity of applicants
- treat as confidential all information about the applicant and the applicant's operation gained through the evaluation process, and take the following precautions:
    o Applicant information is not discussed with anyone, including other Examiners, with the exception of designated team members, Judges, the Award Administrator, and NIST representatives. This includes information contained in the written application, as well as any additional information obtained during a site visit.
    o Names of applicants are not disclosed during or after the application review process.

- o No copies of application information are made or retained. (ASQ will notify Examiners when to return materials.)
- o No notes, written or electronic, pertaining to the application are retained. (ASQ will notify Examiners when to destroy all notes.)
- o Applicant-specific information can be discussed via cellular phone, cordless phone, and VoIP if authorized by the applicant. However, applicant names are not used within print or discussions.
- o Electronic exchanges are only through an encrypted, secure Web site designated by NIST.
- o No applicant information is adapted and/or used subsequent to the review process, unless the information is publicly released by the applicant (at the annual Quest for Excellence Conference, for example).
- o Examiners do not reveal or discuss with other Examiners, either during training or during the application review phases, their participation with an organization in the preparation of an Award application.

- during Independent Review, personally and independently evaluate and score all assigned applications
- during Independent and Consensus Reviews, not communicate with applicant organization, or in any manner seek additional documentation, information, or clarification about the applicant's organization. This restriction includes Internet searches. At Site Visit Review, the site visit Team Leader will communicate with the applicant.
- during the entire evaluation cycle use only applicant-specific information provided by the applicant. Not at anytime use independently gathered information on the applicant, e.g. from the press, web sites, or other social media.
- not at anytime (during or after the evaluation cycle) independently give feedback to applicants regarding scoring or overall performance
- upon completion of the Examiner Preparation Course, be able to use the following designation: Examiner, Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award (MBNQA), and year(s) served. However, board members may not use the MBNQA logo in advertising or promotion or use business cards including the Examiner designation or the MBNQA logo.
- during the consensus and site visit processes, encourage and maintain a professional working environment that promotes respect for the Award applicants, their employees, and all members of the Examiner team
- when participating in a site visit, respect the climate, culture, and values of the organization being evaluated

Reflection & Closing

Purpose

The purpose and goal of this module is to reinforce the day's work and reflect.

- What did you learn?

- What are your strengths?

- What do you need to do differently or to develop?

- What questions do you still need answered?

- What are your next steps?

Capture your notes here.

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