One possibility for the students is to include in their report a reflection which is structured around the Approaches to Learning (ATL) skills.

This example is an extract from a student's Personal Project report. In colour you can see how the supervisor analyzed and identified evidence of Approaches to Learning (ATL) skills in this section of the report.

> **What do I reflect on in terms of my development as a learner?**
> *You need to reflect on your growth in relation to the ATL skills you have used and annotated in your Process Journal. You need to give evidence of how you have improved your skills or why you still need to further develop them.*

> **What is action?**
> *Action is learning by doing and experiencing. As you have gone through the planning and development of your project, you have engaged in action as you have researched, learnt and decided what actions to take and when.*

Reflection on Learning

Intro

Undertaking the Personal Project was a very challenging and rewarding experience and by completing the whole inquiry process I was able to readily engage in action as I was constantly utilizing and developing my ATL (Approaches to Learning) skills in order to achieve my goal. I learnt a lot about my own abilities as a learner and a person and found that by working on my project in a productive and responsive manner, I was in fact engaging in action. I was encountering problems, researching solutions, making decisions and ultimately creating solutions. I have always thought I was an organized, persistent and creative worker, but on reflection the project highlighted many skills and attributes I had to quickly develop and act on in order to achieve my goal.

Communicating

Communicating is one of the skill areas of the ATL's and a very clear opportunity to engage in action by engaging in written and verbal communication with others, listening to what they have to say, questioning their expertise and ultimately using the information I was able to gain. Communicating with adults was a huge component of my project. Some of the people I knew, but many of them I didn't. I had to refine my written (see appendix 1 & 2) and verbal skills, making sure that I was professional in my dealings with everyone and actively listening to what others were saying in order to achieve the best outcome for my goal. This was an intimidating thing for me to do, but something that has helped me grow as I feel far more confident independently dealing with adults, with whom I don't have a pre-existing relationship.

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Self management

I am normally a very organized person, so did not think much about the self management ATL's, but the Personal Project has so many aspects to it, it wasn't just about keeping appointments and due dates. I had to organize my time, my research, my meetings with my supervisor and my mentor as well. I found I had to use a diary to juggle my time, setting due dates for myself, allocating time to each aspect of research or construction, in order to accommodate the busy life I lead. I also had to organize my research as I was gathering information from many sources. I ended up recording my research in a table (see appendix 3). This way I was able to keep track of where I had gained my knowledge from as I recorded the information, date, and bibliographic details of each source. This clearly reflects my engagement with action as I was really learning by doing. I had created several note taking formats, but found flaws in each and therefore had to keep modifying as I went to produce my ultimate format that ensured I was able to logically collate all my information.

Social skills

Collaboration is a really important aspect of the project and the perfect opportunity to engage in action. I was reliant on guidance and help from others, but also needed to show respect for the people helping me, by showing them I was engaged, listening to their advice and acting on it. When I met with my mentor I would always go along prepared with questions I needed to have answered to make sure I didn't waste any of my time and especially hers. After each meeting I would complete a Journal entry (see appendix 4-6) to make sure I recorded the answers to my questions, any notes on advice or tips she gave me and also to make a list of the next steps I needed to complete in order to achieve my overall goal. This is a skill and an organization technique that I found easy to use, very useful and I can see this will help me in future research projects.

Research

I really enjoyed the research aspect of my project as I learnt to use primary sources of information. I did use the internet and a few books to research sewing skills and design techniques, but by far collaborating with an actual expert, sharing their ideas and putting my internet and book research into action and seeking the opinion and clarification from my mentor was by far the most meaningful research I completed. This experience has changed my perspective and definitely developed my research skills as I think I will now look more broadly as to where I can find accurate and useful information. I wont simply rely on the internet.

Thinking skills

When I look at what thinking skills really entail, I can see that my project experience has in many ways required me to use and develop all aspects. As my project progressed, I was faced with hurdles and challenges requiring action and ultimately me finding ways around them. I was constantly reflecting on my project, identifying the weaknesses, considering options and possible solutions, then applying my solution or transferring my knowledge to overcome the obstacle. This was the part I actually enjoyed the most as it was my project and I was able to be as creative as I wanted to be.

Conclusion

Now that I have reached the end of my project I can see that I have grown as a person and as a learner. I can see that my every step forward in my project was actually me engaging in action to ultimately achieve my goal. As a result I think I am far more independent and empowered to take control of my own learning and research beyond the Personal Project.

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