

Getting Started

A Heuristic for Developing a Reflective Writing Assignment

1. What are your goals for the reflective writing assignment? In other words, what do you want students to learn, achieve, or demonstrate in this assignment? (e.g., new understanding of experience, relevance of course material to professional field)
2. How do your goals for the assignment fit with the objectives of this course, program, or discipline? Indicate the specific objectives that this assignment will work toward. (e.g., developing critical thinking skills)
3. What do students need to learn before they take on this assignment? (e.g., how to write reflectively, specific course content)
4. Is this a standalone assignment? A series of assignments (e.g., learning log, journal)? A contribution to a larger, more substantial assignment (e.g., ePortfolio, academic essay)?
5. What medium/genre/form do you want this reflection to take? (e.g., blog post, formal essay)
6. Who is the literal or imagined audience for this reflective writing assignment (e.g., professionals in this field, writing partner, self)?

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7. What levels of reflection do I expect my students to demonstrate? What questions can I pose to them to help elicit that reflection? (Refer to the “Framework for Reflection” handout for a thorough explanation of these levels of reflection. Not all levels of reflection are necessary for thoughtful reflection, and levels can be used in different combinations.)

Reporting

Prompting Questions:

Responding

Prompting Questions:

Relating

Prompting Questions:

Reasoning

Prompting Questions:

Reconstructing

Prompting Questions:

Repackaging

Prompting Questions:

8. Will this assignment be graded or ungraded?

- a. If it is graded, how is it weighted, in comparison to other course assignments?
- b. If it is graded, what criteria will you look for as you grade it?

9. What kind of feedback will you focus on, and how will you provide it? Will your feedback help students write subsequent reflections for the class? Will your feedback have specific practical applications?

10. Given all of these answers, how will you explain this work, its purpose, and its value to students?