

situations (in the course and/or beyond). Students have many experiences during their university career but may not often seek or have the time to consider how these experiences connect to their personal experiences, the course material, and/or their future ambitions. Instructors must consider how they can facilitate opportunities for students to articulate and showcase their learning. These reflective activities are also great opportunities for students to develop skills in critical thinking, communication, and giving and receiving feedback. Additionally, activities around critical reflection can also be an important opportunity to solicit, engage with, and make use of formative feedback from your students as part of the learning process. Insights from students' reflections can act as a check for understanding of key course concepts and a way to gauge how and if students are engaged with different elements of the course.

HOW CAN INSTRUCTORS INCORPORATE REFLECTION IN IN THEIR TEACHING?

Instructors who want to incorporate critical reflection in their courses should consider the following:

1. **Be clear.** Critical reflection is a skill that students may not be familiar with. Providing students with examples, clear instructions, specific prompt questions, and any other resources to help them move through the different stages of reflection can help students get the most out of reflection activities.
2. **Make sure reflective activities are a dialogue rather than a monologue.** Learning can be particularly impactful when students can learn from their instructor and each other. Consider ways that students can share their reflections and engage with feedback, opinions, and ideas.
3. **Provide feedback on both the process and the product.** Knowing that reflection is a skill as well as a teaching strategy, consider how students can benefit from feedback on developing the skill of reflecting critically on an experience while also receiving feedback on their final reflection. Remember – feedback doesn't always mean a mark or grade! Formative feedback can help students know if they're on the right track and can provide the instructor with meaningful insight into how students are learning from and in a variety of experiences.
4. **Consider multiple ways for students to share their reflections.** While many reflective activities can be done by writing (e.g. reflective essays), students can reflect and express themselves best through a variety of means. Where applicable and feasible, consider offering students the opportunity to share their reflections verbally (live or via video recording), using images (drawings or photographs), or using other tools that don't rely solely on the written word.
5. **Make connections with larger module, course, or degree outcomes.** Be transparent and explicit in how reflection activities tie into students' ongoing learning.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES (Internal)

Strategies for Meaningful Feedback on Student Reflection (Teaching Commons Resource).

https://www.yorku.ca/teachingcommons/wp-content/uploads/sites/38/2022/11/StrategiesForMeaningfulFeedbackOnStudentReflection_Handout.pdf

Preparing Students for Critical Reflection: Online Module.

<https://eclass.yorku.ca/eclass/course/view.php?id=37596>

Experiential Education Toolbox. <https://www.yorku.ca/yuexperience/experiential-education-toolbox/>

Reflecting On (Your) Practice: A Self-Paced Guide to Engaged Teaching.

<https://www.yorku.ca/teachingcommons/resources/#reflecting-on-your-practice>

Experiential Education Guide (Resource for Students). <https://eeguide.info.yorku.ca/>

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES (External)

Explore in 15-30 Minutes

Reflection Activities (The University of Tennessee Knoxville). <https://teaching.utk.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/78/2018/04/ReflectionActivities.pdf>

Brock University Centre for Pedagogical Innovation—Role of Reflection Toolbox.
<https://brocku.ca/pedagogical-innovation/resources/experiential-education/role-of-reflection/>

Explore in 30-60 minutes

Ryan, M. (2013). The pedagogical balancing act: Teaching reflection in higher education. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 18(2), 144-155.

Reflection Toolkit (The University of Edinburgh). <https://www.ed.ac.uk/reflection>

Explore in 60+ minutes

Heritage, M. (2010). *Formative Assessment: Making it happen in the classroom*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Mezirow, J., and Associates. (1990). *Fostering critical reflection in adulthood: A guide to transformation and emancipatory learning*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Rolfe, G., Freshwater, D., & Jasper, M. (2001). *Critical reflection in nursing and the helping professions: a user's guide*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Schon, D.A. (1987). *Educating the reflective practitioner: Toward a new design for teaching and learning in the profession*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Whalen, K., & Paez, A. (2019). Development of a new framework to guide, assess, and evaluate student reflections in a university sustainability course. *Teaching and Learning Inquiry*, 7(1), 55-77.

Would you like to learn more?

Contact us at Teaching Commons for additional resources, handouts, applications, courses, workshops, examples, advice, assistance, one-on-one consulting, and everything else related to teaching and learning. We are happy and eager to assist you!



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