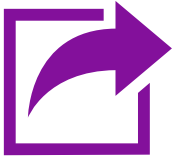




CRITICAL THINKING

Skill name

Critical reflection



Strategies to share with students

Suggested ideas and practices educators can share with students to support awareness of the topic and development of the skill. Strategies can be adopted/adapted as needed.

- Review different **models** for reflective practice to see which ones resonate and are most useful for your context (e.g., Gibbs' Reflective Cycle; Borton's What-So What-Now What Model (1970); Seidel and Blythe's Compass Model (1996)).
- Develop a daily or near-daily **writing habit** so that you are writing brief reflections on your learning while it is still fresh in your memory.
- Focus on the **analytic components of reflection** (how I experienced the learning, how I will use what I learned moving forward) over the summary components (what I learned).
- Partner with peers to create a supportive **community of practice** in which you make time to write together and share your reflections on your learning journey.
- Be patient**—it takes time to develop reflective capacity and writing about subjective experiences can be more challenging than writing that emphasizes logic and argumentation. Take time to understand your own social **location** (i.e., your intersectional positionality along axes of power and oppression such as race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, class, religion, and ability) and how this affects your learning.



Critical reflection



Tips for course design and delivery

Ways educators can bring awareness of the topic and incorporate development of the skill into post-secondary course design and delivery.

- ✓ **Scaffold a reflective practice** throughout the course to model the ways in which it is an ongoing and organic process, rather than a one-off or occasional skill.
- ✓ **Model reflection** in your teaching by talking about how you have designed the course and why you have done it in this way.
- ✓ **Share your social location** and how it impacts your teaching, learning, and research practices.
- ✓ **Link critical reflection activities to learning objectives** to demonstrate how this skill is not external to the course content learning, but rather an integral part of it.
- ✓ For any critical reflection activities or assignments, **provide templates and/or exemplars** for students to support what may be a new skill for them.
- ✓ In addition to structured reflective assignments and activities, **include opportunities for informal reflection** through class and small-group discussion or by occasionally requesting that students take five minutes to write about what they just learned and how they experienced that learning—not all reflective work can or should be formally assessed. If you are assessing the work, consider who is evaluating it because some elements that are shared could be personal.



Critical reflection



Activities to do with students

Downloadable activities with suggested guidelines that educators can do with students. Activities can be adopted/adapted as needed.

Activity: 4 Cs Reflection

Overview

Students write a short critical reflection based on a topic or a prompt provided. Students use the 4 Cs (contextualize, connected, continuous, and challenging) framework to guide their reflection and achieve meaning and depth.

Review the [Educator Activity Guide](#) before getting started with this activity.

Time

- Under 20 minutes
- 20 minutes to 1 hour
- More than 1 hour
- Over several classes

Modality

- In person
- Online synchronous
- Online asynchronous

Format

- Individual
- In pairs
- Small groups
- Large groups
- Whole class

Resources

- Module notes
- Paper
- Pen/pencil
- Laptop/tablet
- Recent assignment/lecture



Critical reflection

Instructions

1. Identify a time in your course (or multiple time points) where students would benefit from writing a reflection. Early in the course, after a recent assignment/lecture, inform students that you will be building on these assignment/lecture in both time (e.g., beginning and end of class) and space (e.g., at the end of an assignment). They will then write short reflections about modules/units/topics, etc. they have just completed.
2. Introduce students to the 4Cs of reflection.
 - Contextualized: Reflection should relate to the content of the learning task/course component
 - Connected: Reflection should expand into real-world applications
 - Continuous: Reflection should incorporate before/during/after the learning task/course component
 - Challenging: Reflection should challenge thinking to open critical and creative paths
3. Provide students with prompts for their reflection or have them come up with their own. Some examples could include reflections associated with setting goals, commenting on progress in a course, etc.
4. Assign a reflection and if possible, keep it low-stakes tasks (e.g., without an excessive emphasis on structure or grammar, graded for completion, etc.) so that students can focus on the reflection and apply the 4Cs. Encourage multiple formats as well (e.g., written, oral, visual, etc.).
5. Optional: Model how to write a reflection using the 4Cs as a framework.

Variation(s)

- Offer opportunities for students to share their reflections with each other or with you to support relationship building and a writing/reflective community practice.



Critical reflection



Activities to do with students

Downloadable activities with suggested guidelines that educators can do with students. Activities can be adopted/adapted as needed.

Activity: Assignment Reflections

Overview

Recognizing that their subjective experiences can influence how they approach their work, build in critical reflection into student assignments. Students use the prompts that are provided to them and can add new ones to develop their ability to reflect critically.

Review the [Educator Activity Guide](#) before getting started with this activity.

Time

- Under 20 minutes
- 20 minutes to 1 hour
- More than 1 hour
- Over several classes

Modality

- In person
- Online synchronous
- Online asynchronous

Format

- Individual
- In pairs
- Small groups
- Large groups
- Whole class

Resources

- Module notes
- Paper
- Pen/pencil
- Laptop/tablet
- Examples of reflexivity statements, upcoming assignment examples



Critical reflection

Instructions

1. Describe the concept of reflexivity as it relates to one's research (examining one's beliefs, views, and practices and considering how these may affect one's research and work; reflection on the research process and the learner's subjective experience of that process).
2. Form/have students form small groups.
3. Provide the following prompt (or a variation of it) on the board and give groups 5 to 10 minutes to discuss it.
4. Because learning, research, and writing are never politically neutral, it is beneficial for students to reflect on how their own social location, long-held beliefs, and values impact on their learning and on their assessment of their learning. List some of these benefits.
5. Invite the groups to share their responses in a whole-class discussion.
6. After this discussion, place the following prompt (or a variation of it) on the board and repeat the process (group discussion, followed by whole-class discussion).
7. Increasingly, scholars are incorporating reflexive practice into research papers, manuscripts, and conference presentations to acknowledge the subjectivity of their work and to make explicit the connection between their learning and the communication piece that shares their knowledge and arguments. What might these statements include?
8. Optional: Provide or have students look for examples of reflexive statements by writers in their research papers to model the two prompts discussed in this activity.
9. Identify an upcoming assignment(s) (e.g., research paper, argumentative essay) and, with students, co-create a way for them to explicitly and formally include reflexivity. Reflexivity can be incorporated
 - in the introduction
 - as an additional section before or after the introduction
 - in the conclusion
 - as an additional section in the paper before the concluding section
10. Provide students with time to begin writing their assignment reflections.

Variation(s)

- Students can refer to their past work in this course or in others and offer a reflexive response.



Critical reflection



Activities to do with students

Downloadable activities with suggested guidelines that educators can do with students. Activities can be adopted/adapted as needed.

Activity: Learning Dossier

Overview

Students create a dossier that is a collection of artifacts (e.g., essay, photos, projects) based on what they have learned in a course. Students offer a written reflection into how each item supports the course expectations, their process in creating it, and how they will use this learning in the future.

Review the [Educator Activity Guide](#) before getting started with this activity.

Time

- Under 20 minutes
- 20 minutes to 1 hour
- More than 1 hour
- Over several classes

Format

- Individual
- In pairs
- Small groups
- Large groups
- Whole class

Modality

- In person
- Online synchronous
- Online asynchronous

Resources

- Module notes
- Paper
- Pen/pencil
- Laptop/tablet
- Blog or website



Critical reflection

Instructions

1. Begin this activity early in the semester (e.g., first week) by writing critical reflection on the board and asking students to offer their thoughts on the meaning of these words.
 - Student responses should suggest that critical reflection is thinking about what you learn, how you can improve, and how you can use your learning.
 - Review the module notes (www.hiddencurriculum.ca) ahead of introducing the activity for support in guiding this discussion and for ideas to share with students.
2. Explain to students that they will be creating a learning dossier (e.g., ePortfolio) to critically reflect on their learning. This activity is best incorporated throughout the entire term so that reflective practice is scaffolded.
3. Have students select a free blog site, such as Wix or WordPress, and follow the process to set up a space for their work.
4. When students complete an assignment, have them upload artifacts that demonstrate their learning (e.g., papers, slide decks, photos of tangible objects they created, media clippings from community projects etc.). Tell students to provide formal reflections on
 - what those artifacts are
 - how they felt while learning
 - what they learned during the process of creating the artifacts
 - how they will use that learning in the future
5. Instruct students to incorporate regular reflections on course material, their learning process, assignment methodologies, skills developed etc.
6. Invite students to share some of their reflections and artifacts with the class. Engage students in a conversation about the how self-reflection supports their learning.

Variation(s)

- Encourage students to discuss how they can use this learning dossier in their academics beyond the course and as part of their future career and employment planning. Students can also include a resume, CV, or sample cover letter with their dossier.

