Using Reflective Writing to Enhance Student Engagement, Critical Thinking & Learning Transfer

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ITL 2016, GMU
Why Reflective Writing?

Freewrite:

• Why are you interested in this session?
• What do you hope to achieve in your classes?
Why Reflective Writing?
Why Reflective Writing?

1. Increase student engagement & investment
2. Make learning visible: help students “witness their learning” (Yancey, 1998)
Why Reflective Writing?

3. Help students become agents of their learning (Yancey, 1998)
   - Facilitate Critical Thinking
   - Process recognition (Alrubail, 2015; Colley et al, 2012)
   - Strategies and solutions (Alrubail, 2015)
4. Facilitate learning transfer
   – Influenced by relevance and learner motivation
   – Thinking and processes cross disciplines (Colley et al, 2012)
   – Reiterative Process: Learning is often not linear, so ongoing reflection can help students develop their own learning “frameworks” (Yancey, Robertson & Taczk, 2014)
Setting Goals

• Course Goals (1, 2, 3, 4): Continuously return to goals & achievement
  – Can include a formal reflection essay
  – Can be extended in a vertical curriculum

• Project Goals (1, 2, 3, 4)
Assignment Reflections & Annotations

• Project end notes (1, 2, 3)
• Project annotations (2, 4)
Ongoing Reflections

• Graded Reflection Journals (1, 2, 3)
  – Reading
  – Learning/Process
  – Self-assigned
Ongoing Reflections

• Research or Process Journals or Blogs (2, 3)
  – Instructor generated questions
  – Simple, direct Qs

• Reflecting on Journals (1, 2, 3, 4)
  – Reading, research, process, labs
Public or Private?
Public or Private?

- Access to other learners’ reflections can be a powerful tool to collectively develop a conceptual understanding of a topic (Baggetun & Wasson, 2006)

- Journals led to more personal and emotional risks &

- Blogs led to more intellectual risks (Foster, 2015, p. 111-12)
Applications

• What are 1-2 ways that you might use reflective writing in your own class?
• Why? How would it help you achieve the goals that you set at the start?


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- http://www.clipartkid.com/any-questions-cliparts/
- https://www.theodysseyonline.com/years-resolution-2016