

Prompts for Critical Reflection

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There are many different frameworks that can help structure reflection. Regardless of the framework, providing students with prompts can ensure they are moving beyond summary to critically examine their learning experience. Below you will find a series of scaffolded prompts that move students through the process of describing what they learned, synthesizing new knowledge with prior knowledge, and analyzing the impact of the learning on their educational, personal, or professional development.

For each category, there are multiple prompts. It is not necessary to include all of these prompts in a single assessment – in fact, doing so would likely be overwhelming. Instead, choose prompts that resonate with your intended learning outcome(s) and aim to include at least one prompt from each category.

# Acquisition of Knowledge

Students articulate what they learned, what happened during an experience, and/or what they noticed. Possible prompts might include:

* What is (at least) one thing you learned?
* What new skills did you gain during this experience?
* What did you observe during this experience?
* What were your expectations going into this experience?
* What part of the experience did you find challenging?
* What part of the experience did you find exciting?

# Synthesis of Knowledge

Students synthesize their learning by making connections between the learning experience, course concepts, and prior knowledge. Possible prompts might include:

* What prior skills or knowledge did you need to engage with this experience?
* How might someone else perceive this learning experience?
* What does the academic literature say to support or challenge your understanding of the experience?
* How does your experience relate to course content?
* How has your understanding of concepts changed as a result of this experience?

# Reflection of Impact

Students consider the impact of the learning experience on their own educational, personal, or professional development. Possible prompts might include:

* How will you apply what you learned from this experience going forward?
* What are you going to do as a result of this experience?
* How will this experience contribute to your professional development?
* How will this experience change your local community going forward?
* What might you still need to learn? How would you go about learning it?
* Is there anything that is still unclear? How might you deal with anything that is still unclear?

## Modifying Reflection Prompts

The reflection prompts provided are merely a starting point. While they can be used as is, you may want to modify them to address specific course content or themes. For example, you can replace general references to course content with specific examples from a course or learning experience.