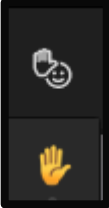Developing Students' Reflection Skills Through Assessment and Feedback Strategies

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DEVELOPING STUDENTS' REFLECTION SKILLS THROUGH ASSESSMENT AND FEEDBACK STRATEGIES

6/24/2021

Katherine Lithgow & **Victoria Feth**, Centre for Teaching Excellence
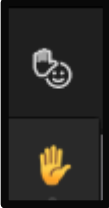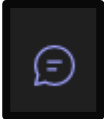
Part of the Integrative & Experiential Learning Series

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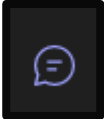
Reflection: Assessment and Feedback Strategies

Developing Students' Reflection Skills Through Assessment and Feedback Strategies

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Webinar Overview

- Introduction

- Choosing the Appropriate Reflective Framework

- Choosing to Assess Reflection

- Providing Feedback

- Incorporating Opportunities for Students to Use Feedback

- Q&A

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Webinar Objectives

By the end of this webinar, you should be able to:

- Identify strategies and activities that you can incorporate into your own courses and programs.

- With a better sense of the purpose and process of grading and giving feedback, feel more confident assessing reflection in general.

- Identify how to give students opportunities to practice reflection.

- Recognize that feedback should be more than information.

Feedback is something that students can act upon in a timely manner to enhance their ability to integrate feedback and their capacity to reflect.

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John Dewey

"We don't learn from experience... we learn by reflecting on the experience."

Chat: When you think of reflection, what are some words or phrases you might include in a definition?

Critical Reflection

- The **conscious examination** of past experiences, thoughts and ways of doing things.

- Its goal is to **surface learning** about oneself and the situation, and to bring meaning to it in order to inform the present and the future.

- It **challenges the status quo** of practice, thoughts and assumptions and may therefore inform our decisions, actions, attitudes, beliefs and understanding about ourselves.

Source: https://www.ed.ac.uk/reflection/facilitators-toolkit

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According to Dewey, reflection

- is a learned skill. It must be practiced and informed by feedback.

- is a complex, rigorous, intellectual exercise.

- is also an **emotional** exercise.

- is a meaning-making process:

  - Reflection helps us set goals, use what we've learned in the past to inform future action and consider the real-life implications of our thinking.

- is the link between thinking and doing.

- **takes time to do well.**

Source: Dewey, 1916/1944; Schön, 1983; Rodgers, 2002

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Benefits of Reflection

- Allowing us to **improve our own practice** to gain better outcomes in the future

- Increasing/improving our **performance and skills**

- Increasing our **awareness of our abilities and attributes** and our **evidence for these**

- Developing and expanding our **employability**

- **Evaluating** the quality and success of our **action plans**

- **Applying theoretical knowledge/frameworks to real experiences** and using this to expand our understanding of the underlying theory

Source: https://www.ed.ac.uk/reflection/facilitators-toolkit

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Choosing the Appropriate Framework

You're convinced that reflection is worthwhile. Now what?

The appropriate framework should match your purpose

- It's important to have a sense of purpose around integrating reflection into your course.

- **Choose a framework that aligns with your learning outcomes (LOs).** See planning questions on next slide.

For more information on frameworks, see our previous webinar **Integrating Reflection into Teaching and Learning** https://uwaterloo.ca/centre-for-teaching-excellence/workshop-resources/integrative-and-experiential-education-series/2021-integrative-and-experiential-learning-series

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Planning Questions: Putting First Things First

- Why am I asking students to reflect (what do I hope they gain from it)?

- **How does this assignment/activity relate to my learning outcomes?**

- **Is there clear alignment between this assignment/activity and the course's learning outcomes?**

- What does "doing well" on this assignment/activity look like?

- What will not be sufficient to pass?

- What questions/aspects must be addressed for this work to be acceptable?

- What are the different dimensions that make up the assignment/activity? (E.g., clarity, critical thinking, evidence, etc.)

Source: https://www.ed.ac.uk/reflection/facilitators-toolkit/assessment/criteria

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What? So What? Now What?

| What? (Description and Self-Awareness)	So What? (Analysis)	Now What? (Synthesis)
• What happened? • What did I do? • What did the other do? • What was I trying to achieve? • What was good or bad about the experience?	• So what is the importance of this? • So what more do I need? • What did I learn?	• Now what could I do? • Now what might be the consequences? • Now what do I do to resolve this situation?

Source: Borton, T (1970) Reach, Teach and Touch. McGraw Hill, London

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Describe	**E**xamine	**A**rticulate **L**earning

• Describe the experience objectively.
• Use the five Ws:
  • What?
  • Where?
  • Who?
  • When?
  • Why?
	• Examine the experience through reflection prompts by category of learning goals:
	  • Personal growth
	  • Civic engagement
	  • Academic enhancement
		• What did I learn?
		• How did I learn it?
		• What does it matter?
		• What will I do in light of it?

Source: Ash & Clayton, 2009

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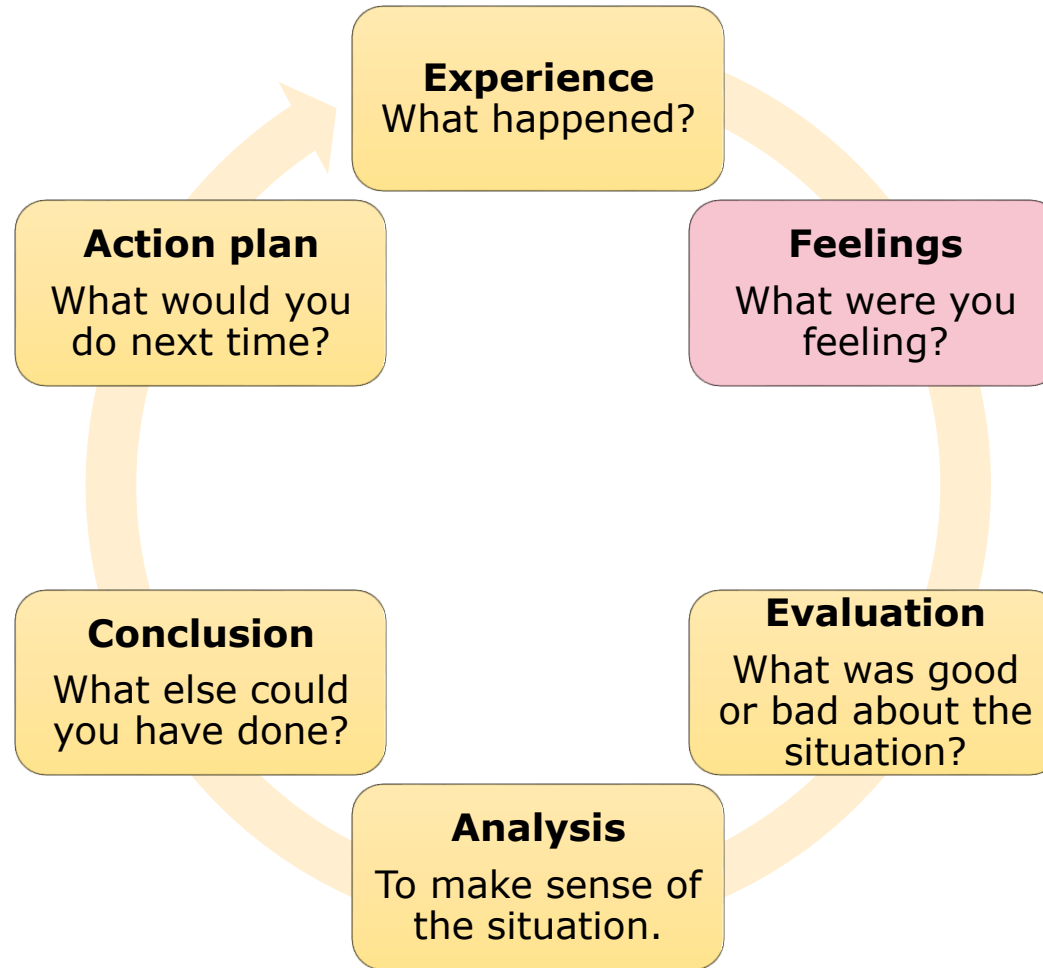
Gibbs

Gibbs' reflective cycle. **Source:** adapted from Dye, 2011

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Bain's 5 Rs (4 Rs)

Reporting	Responding	Relating	Reasoning	Reconstructing
• Trigger for reflection • Write a brief descriptive account of the experience or issue. • What happened? What did the experience involve?	• Affective domain • Your emotional / personal response to the experience • Your observations • What were your feelings, ideas, questions about the experience?	• Personal and / or theoretical understandings relevant to the experience • Making connections between the situation / issue and your experience, skills, knowledge and understanding	• Your explanation of the experience • Explaining the experience in terms of the significant factors, relevant theory, and existing knowledge	• Drawing conclusions and developing a future action plan • Your deeper level of understanding about the situation / issue that is used to reframe or reconstruct your future practice and further develop understanding of your professional practice

Source: Bain, J.D., Ballantyne, R., Mills, C. & Lester, N.C. (2002) Reflecting on practice: Student teachers' perspectives, Post Pressed: Flaxton, Qld

Reflection: Assessment and Feedback Strategies

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STAR (L) or STAR (T)

Situation	Task	Action	Result	Learning
• Briefly explain the task or experience and the context.	• What was the task you were required to undertake or engage in?	• What did you do? Make sure you write from an 'I' perspective.	• What were the results of your actions? (They may not be as successful as you hoped. Often it is the negative examples that show how you learn and develop your skills.) How do you personally evaluate your success or the effect of your practice?	• What did you learn from this experience and how might it affect future practice and performance? What would you do differently in future? What do your plan to follow up? What further learning opportunities will you look for?

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Default PebblePad Templates

- PebblePad offers plug-and-play reflective templates:

  - **What? So What? Now What?**

  - Structured Reflection

  - Journal Entry

  - **Star Technique**

Situation

Outline a specific situation where you applied particular skills or knowledge. Describe where you were and what was happening.

Task

What needed to be done? What was your role in the situation? What was the desired outcome?

Action

What did you do? How did you deal with the situation? What skills did you use?

Result

What was the outcome? What impact did your actions have on the result?

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Choosing to Assess Reflection

You've chosen your framework. Now what?

Factors to Consider in Whether to Assess

- How will you indicate to students the importance of reflection within your course?

- How will you encourage students to engage appropriately with reflection?

Assessment type is one factor – see next slide.

- How will you steer and influence the type of reflections your students produce? See Choosing the Appropriate Framework slides previous.

- Who will do the assessment? What resources are required? Assessment criteria and rubrics?

Source: https://www.ed.ac.uk/reflection/facilitators-toolkit/assessment/should-assess

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Assessment Types

- Voluntary

- For completion

- Formative

  - Ungraded OR low-stakes graded

- Summative

  - Typically high-stakes graded

  - Might be pass/fail or numeric

Source: https://www.ed.ac.uk/reflection/facilitators-toolkit/assessment/should-assess

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Who is Assessing?

Introduction to Edinburgh Reflection Toolkit: https://www.ed.ac.uk/reflection

- Take 3 minutes to go to https://www.ed.ac.uk/reflection/facilitators-toolkit/assessment/assess-assignment.

- Scroll to the "Summative assessment performed by:" and "Formative assessment performed by:" pros and cons of each type of marker:

  - Course organizer (tutors) i.e., instructor

  - Peers

  - Self

How might this inform your choice of whether to assess reflection? Share.

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Providing Feedback

- Assessment/Grading and Feedback Philosophy

- Rubrics

- Feedback Statements

Chat: Assessment, Feedback, and You

- Think of your own assessment and feedback practices.

- Share your answer(s) to any of the following questions.
  - What words or phrases would you use to describe your approach?
  - What is one challenge you face?
  - What is one aspect of your approach that works well?
  - Will these same assessment and feedback practices transfer well to assessing reflection?

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Boud and Molloy 2013;
Henderson et al. 2019b

Feedback is no longer seen simply as comments provided by teachers to students about their work, but **as a process that needs active and continuing student engagement if it is to lead to learning.**

Source: Boud, D., & Dawson, P. (2021). What feedback literate teachers do: an empirically-derived competency framework. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 1-14.

Carless (2015)

… identified this radical refocusing of the concept of feedback in higher education as a paradigm shift from seeing feedback as an input to students at a particular point in time to **feedback as an ongoing process in which all parties have a role to play.**

Source: Boud, D., & Dawson, P. (2021). What feedback literate teachers do: an empirically-derived competency framework. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 1-14.

Assessment/Grading and Feedback Philosophy

- In general, reflection should be assessed for critical thinking and given feedback.
  Source: Ash & Clayton, 2009; Eyler et al., 1996; Bringle & Hatcher, 1999; Zlotowski & Clayton, 2005

- You must give a grade, but the way you do so can free your time and concerns about giving the "right" grade.

- Feedback should be given in a way that encourages students to go back and use it for improvement.

- Models/exemplars (showing what does and doesn't work), especially when assessed by students, help students not only understand their grades and feedback, but also do better in the first place.

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Assessment/Grading and Feedback – Where do I start?

- You have decided to do reflection in your course. ☑

- You have decided one of the following:

  - **To use a framework and corresponding rubric**, perhaps with some of your own small changes ☑
    OR

  - To create some or all of the structure (framework, marking scheme, etc.) ☑
    You need a set of criteria! How do you determine that criteria?

- **Remember:** Return to planning questions often to ensure you're staying on course.

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Planning Questions: Assessment

▪ Why am I asking students to reflect (what do I hope they gain from it)?

▪ How does this assignment/activity relate to my learning outcomes?

▪ Is there clear alignment between this assignment/activity and the course's learning outcomes?

▪ **What does "doing well" on this assignment/activity look like?**

▪ **What will not be sufficient to pass?**

▪ **What questions/aspects must be addressed for this work to be acceptable?**

▪ **What are the different dimensions that make up the assignment/activity? (E.g., clarity, critical thinking, evidence, etc.)**

Source: https://www.ed.ac.uk/reflection/facilitators-toolkit/assessment/criteria

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Rubrics

- Consider the degree of detail and structure.

  - Instructor's POV – How much time do **you** want to spend on marking and feedback?

  - Students' POV – If you want students to act on the feedback, how much can they absorb before overwhelm sets in?

    - Consider students' level and previous exposure to reflection and sustainable feedback loops.

- A good rubric will limit the amount of work you need to do—the amount of descriptive feedback you need to provide—by showing students what they missed **and how to achieve it next time**.

Resource: https://uwaterloo.ca/centre-for-teaching-excellence/teaching-resources/teaching-tips/assessing-student-work/grading-and-feedback/rubrics-useful-assessment-tools

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Using a Framework and Corresponding Rubric

- Frameworks and corresponding rubrics offered here:

  - **What? So what? Now what?** → https://sites.ualberta.ca/~hsercweb/pdf/Reflection_Guide_Rubric.pdf

  - **DEAL** → see handout

  - **Bains (5Rs/4Rs)** → https://www.yorku.ca/teachingcommons/wp-content/uploads/sites/38/2021/02/Ryan-Bain-Rubric-Revised.pdf

  - **STAR(L) or STAR(T)** → WatCV: https://watcv.uwaterloo.ca/rubricdemo/

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How do you determine your own criteria?

- **VALUE rubrics:** https://www.aacu.org/value-rubrics (especially Critical Thinking, Integrative Learning, and Lifelong Learning VALUE rubrics)

- **Edinburgh criteria:** https://www.ed.ac.uk/reflection/facilitators-toolkit/assessment/criteria

- **Critical Reflection rubric:** https://brocku.ca/pedagogical-innovation/wp-content/uploads/sites/53/Critical-Reflection-Rubric.pdf

- Planning questions

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Planning Questions: Determining Criteria

- Why am I asking students to reflect (what do I hope they gain from it)?

- How does this assignment/activity relate to my learning outcomes?

- Is there clear alignment between this assignment/activity and the course's learning outcomes?

- **What does "doing well" on this assignment/activity look like?**

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Source: https://www.ed.ac.uk/reflection/facilitators-toolkit/assessment/criteria

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Feedback: Putting Learning Challenges and Gains in Context

- Students see their learning challenges and gains through numbers – numeric grades – we have trained them to do this!

- But we can use good feedback strategies to help students understand these numbers **in context**.

- Feedback, while often combined with grades, can also stand on its own.

- **So, what does good feedback look like, that doesn't take up too much of your time but also allows students to make actionable changes?**

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Feedback: Good Practices to Enhance Students' Ability to Reflect

- Assign three reflections throughout the term – research shows this is the ideal number to avoid reflection fatigue

- Use the same rubric each time so students can observe their learning challenges and gains; reading and using feedback is itself a reflective process

- Use a comment bank (a.k.a. feedback statements) for consistency and timely feedback

  - Word document

  - PebblePad feedback statements

  - LEARN rubrics with preset feedback section

Resource: https://uwaterloo.ca/centre-for-teaching-excellence/teaching-resources/teaching-tips/tips-address-assessment-consistency-many-assessors

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Feedback Statements in PebblePad

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Preset Feedback on LEARN Rubric

Source: EMLS 101R Spring 2021 Rubric by Roslyn Zehr – used with permission

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Considerations for Assigning Numeric Grades

- How do you break down the **ideally three** individual reflections? E.g., 10% of course grade.

  - Scaffolded approach e.g., 2% → 3% → 5%

  - Improvement approach e.g., if you observed improvement, students can get the max grade.

  - Mark "low" on the first one – be strict, it's a "wake-up call", but with the message they can improve.

  - A combined approach

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Incorporating Opportunities for Students to Use Feedback

Part of the Design Process, *Not* an Afterthought

- Peer- and Self- Review

- Modelling/Exemplars

Carless and Boud (2018)

For feedback processes to be enhanced students need both **appreciation of how feedback can operate effectively and opportunities to use feedback within the curriculum.**"

Source: Carless, D., & Boud, D. (2018). The development of student feedback literacy: Enabling uptake of feedback. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, *43*(8), 1315-1325.

Opportunities for students to use feedback need to be *focused*

- Between first and second reflections, have students point out what they did last time, and what they will do/have done differently this time, in a note to the instructor.

- But **limit** the number of things they need to point out, perhaps to two or three.

- And remember why you are assessing; this should not be about spelling and grammar

- Give **just two or three** prompts:

  - I was surprised that…

  - I was pleased that…

  - I was disappointed that…

  - I felt most successful as a learner when…

  - I felt least successful as a learner when…

Source: POD Listserv September 17, 2012; Gary Parnell, Clinical Associate Professor of Education, Utah State University

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How can peer- and self- review help me to assess students?

- Additional evidence of learning to base assessment/grading decisions on

- Evidence that students' ability to reflect is or is not improving

- Read only the peers' feedback and/or read only the student's response to the peer's feedback and description of changes made

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Focused Feedback Through Peer-Review

- **Good reflective practices, and therefore good feedback practices, take place in community.**
  Source: Rodgers, C. (2002). Defining reflection: Another look at John Dewey and reflective thinking. *The Teachers College Record*, 104(4), 842-866.

- Three instances of reflection: How can **peers** be a source of focused feedback?

  - Use comment banks/feedback statements.

  - Use a rubric but offer practice on exemplars with the rubric first.

  - Read aloud: Group students in 2s or 3s to give each other feedback. Both the reviewer and the reviewee benefit.

    - Reviewer: I don't know what this criteria means.

    - Reviewer: Now that I've seen what my peers are doing, **this** is how I'll improve my own.

    - Both: Targeted plans for change.

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Focused Feedback Through Self-Review

- **Reflection requires attitudes that value personal and intellectual growth.**
  Source: Rodgers, C. (2002). Defining reflection: Another look at John Dewey and reflective thinking. *The Teachers College Record*, 104(4), 842-866.

- Three instances of reflection: How can **oneself** be a source of focused feedback?

  - Use comment banks/feedback statements.

  - Use a rubric but offer practice on exemplars with the rubric first.

  - Read-aloud: Asynchronously in LEARN, use Video Assignment - Individual Project.

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Example: Scaffold the Writing Process with Reflection and Peer Review – Dr. Daniel Bratton

1. Pre-writing

2. First draft

3. **Peer critique of first draft** (peer-review)

4. **Revised submission** → Revisions are prefaced by a "letter to the editor" where **students explain the revisions they made** and why they made them—or didn't. (self-review)
   <mark>*1-4 x 2 = 2 instances of reflection</mark>

5. Everything is collected in a portfolio and capped with a **final reflection** looking back on the term.
   <mark>*3rd instance of reflection</mark>

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Let's revisit our objectives!

By the end of this webinar, you should be able to:

Objective	Choose one and tell us how we met it.
Identify strategies and activities that you can incorporate into your own courses and programs.	
With a better sense of the purpose and process of grading and giving feedback, feel more confident assessing reflection in general.	
Identify how to give students opportunities to practice reflection.	
Recognize that feedback should be more than information.	

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Question & Answer Period

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