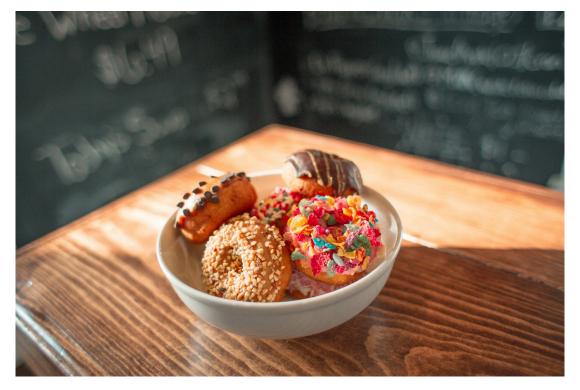
WIIFM?



Courtney Cook on Unsplash

Most of my students in my communications courses are there because they have to be, not because they are drawn to writing. One of my first low stakes assignments is a simple reflection. This task is meant to encourage them to enjoy writing and worry less about formal conventions. I still expect proper grammar, punctuation, content, level of detail, and adherence to APA guidelines, but there is more freedom to write what they know, opposed to a research-focused approach. Here is what is in it for them:

- Experience the power and usefulness of reflection and how it can impact your day-to-day decisions and career results.
- Skill of reflection -- how to practice it and apply it to one's life.
- Opportunity to write without as many boundaries that are typically imposed in academic writing.
- Practice using the APA guide through the library website that will help train them for other assignments requiring such conventions.
- Low risk opportunity to connect with learning supports, such as the Writing Centre, the Language Help Centre, and better understand what and where help is available.
- The ability to include their creativity -- their personal voice -- which will count for grades.
- Low risk, but also low-stress -- students have high anxiety levels that tend to peak during
 major assignments and tests -- this exercise not only prepares them with an
 employability skill of critical thinking, but does so in a semi-relaxed manner.