

Activities to Discern Differences and Similarities: Metacognition, Reflection, and Self-Assessment

Activity A:

Here are definitions to help distinguish between metacognition, reflection, and self-assessment (although there will be overlap). Try to read over the three definitions to get a sense of how these terms can be functionally different (at least for our teaching purposes). Then, when you have a sense of this:

Beneath each definition, write a question or question that a student might ask themselves when engaged in that form of thinking and mostly matching the definition.

Metacognition: “Thinking about thinking” to improve learning (e.g. system 1 versus system 2 thinking; “thinking fast and slow”); slowing down a process to observe it; the effort to gain knowledge about one’s unique thinking process. In writing: planning, monitoring, and evaluating one’s learning in small steps. Includes reflection

E.g. How do I usually think about x? To what extent am I aware of x or y as I am doing. . . ?
What steps did I take to gain an understanding of the text? (Hermina)
What helped me stay focused today that didn’t work last week?
When I got confused in that paragraph, what did I do next? Did it help?
Why do I always get stuck at this point in my writing? What’s going on in my head when that happens?
How do I want to write “to” my audience? Are there certain words or phrases I should use? (Dan)
People who have influenced them–offered a value system that can help spark growth–a reserve you draw on, and how so in writing?

Reflection: Examining experiences and thinking back on them; putting words and feelings to completed actions to gain insight and understanding; describing processes and how they went; a way to process experience to gain knowledge of process, including disciplinary knowledge; often involves deepening realizations about the self and connecting disparate experiences of learning; can be done in different genres (e.g. letter, blogging, commenting on a draft). This is how students

acquire knowledge about what writing for different expectations and in different settings and contexts is like for them. The literature on reflection distinguishes between *reflection-in-action* (making it possible to disrupt potentially counterproductive behaviors while in process) and *reflection-on-action* (“after the fact”). Includes metacognition.

E.g. Where am I becoming stuck in my writing? What can't I get past?
To gain insight, one may ask about their values and influences (Hermina)
Ask questions about specific details
I feel frustrated—am I stuck because of the assignment or because of how I'm approaching it?
That particular assignment went well/was easier than I thought –what was going on?
What went differently in this project compared to the last one?
Map out a difficulty with writing - what is a problem a student has? Let's “web” it (similar to a clustering/brainstorming web) - see why and how they are having difficulty. (Dan)
What part of the process felt good or satisfying—and why?
Did you do to make it easier or help you become interested in the assignment?

Self-assessment: What we understand more broadly as the Self-Assessment for the portfolio; structured evaluation of performance against criteria or standards; an outside-informed perspective on strengths and areas for improvement with reference to future performance; includes both reflection and metacognition, and can be done in different genres and styles.

E.g. How did I do in this course?
What were your challenges and accomplishments during the course? (Hermina)
What was something I got out of this course, to my surprise?
Would someone else—like my professor or a peer—see this as strong work? Why or why not?
How can I use what I've learned outside of class?
What patterns do I notice in my feedback across assignments?

What part of this work actually shows growth—and how can I tell?
What would I like to learn in ENG 24 that continues a conversation we had in 12? (Dan)

Activity B:

Choose several of the following: Try to place the activity within a thinking category or categories --metacognition, reflection (reflection-in-action/ reflection-on-action), self-assessment

Activity	Thinking Category
1.Students observe someone’s particular creative process (for example, a TikTok video) and make connections to the writing process	metacognition
2.Students write a note to teacher as they submit a draft or revision, stating to which comments by the teacher or peers (for example, on a previous draft) they paid close attention, what section of the assignment handout was most helpful (and/or confusing), and what they would work on more if they had more time.	Metacognition, Reflection-on-action Self-assessment Self-assessment
3.Students write their own journal or contribute to a journal noting when and where in a particular writing project they hit a snag or obstacle.	Reflection-in-action, Metacognition Reflection

4.Students review a list of in-class informal writing exercises to this point in the course and tell about one that was meaningful to them.	Reflection-on-action
5.Students write a three to five paragraph essay covering how they think their work through the semester meets each of the three main areas of CLOs for ENG12	Self-assessment
6.Students engage in a long-term observation exercise (B. Blaisdell: Observe a tree over the course of a semester)	Reflection-in-action, Metacognition
7.Students recount in a short, beginning of class writing an observation they made on the way to school, whether about a person they usually see or a thing that attracted their attention and write ten questions about it.	Reflection-in-action, Metacognition
8.Students make a list after they have received feedback on their first draft: Ten steps I'm need to take to get to my second draft. They do this while also considering the comments they received, the sharing of drafts, or having re-annotated the assignment handout.	
9.Students interview one another about their craft or creative hobby. With details about it, they say how their creative processes are alike.	
10.Teacher connects with individual students who are falling behind; inquires about how they have helped themselves to progress in past writing courses	Metacognition, Self-assessment

11. Peers work together to shape the directions for the next writing assignment.	
12. Students annotate a reading on Hypothesis or Google docs along with peers, in groups of three to five. Later, they write a paragraph on connecting with peers over specific comments in this collaborative reading experience.	
13. Students receive a print-out of the comments teachers wrote for them (and which were also sent via Brightspace). They take time to annotate the comments in class.	
14. Students sketch out the rhetorical parameters of a piece of writing in its early stage: This writing is for. . . Its purpose is to. . . Its exigence is. . . The ways in which it will use perspective-taking are. . .	
15. Students re-do the rhetorical sketch-out exercise later in the writing process. How are the parameters changing?	
16. Establish three rules for good paraphrasing. Both students and teacher try out the rules for paraphrasing several paragraphs on a topic. Students and teacher share notes on how applying the rules worked out in their doing the exercise—problems and struggles.	
HERE BELOW: ADD OTHERS FOR US TO DO:	

Students engage in a peer review process and give their peer feedback based on different criterion.	

Activity C:

Annotate this document, noting places where metacognition–reflection–self-assessment surface in these CLOs.

Course Learning Outcomes for Composition 1

I. Rhetorical knowledge| Students in Composition 1 will learn to:

1. Apply basic rhetorical concepts in reading and composing texts. Commonly considered essential concepts include text, author, audience, purpose, setting/exigence.
2. Compose in several genres in order to understand how conventions shape readers' and writers' practices, purposes, and expectations.
3. Apply citation conventions in one's own writing and reflect on why these conventions exist and how they are used in different genres and contexts.

II. Critical writing & reading | Students in Composition 1 will learn to:

1. Identify, through careful reading and listening, the relationships between assertion and evidence, patterns of organization, and strategic language choices.
2. Locate and evaluate research materials.
3. Compose texts that integrate the writer's ideas with those from other texts.

III. The craft of writing & reading| Students in Composition 1 will learn to:

1. Develop a writing project through multiple versions and document one's thinking and choices between those iterations/changes.
2. Select and use strategies for reading, drafting, reviewing, collaborating, revising, rewriting, rereading, and editing.
3. Reflect on one's own development and change as a writer and one's emerging knowledge about the craft of writing, language choices, and language conventions.