

Guide: Teaching Reflection

This guide provides ideas for improving students' ability to reflect on their learning. It includes specific suggestions for helping students reflect on meeting the learning objectives of a lesson.

All thinking requires some type of reflection for learning to take place. Reflection is a cluster of skills that involves observing, questioning, and putting ideas and experiences together to give a fresh meaning to them all. The reflection activities throughout this course bring students a sense of ownership of what they have learned and a better understanding of themselves and their abilities.

Build your students' reflection skills by starting with easier reflection questions that lead to more complex ones. The list below, based on Bloom's Taxonomy, helps students break down what they need to think about so that they gain confidence and strengthen their metacognition. Because each question takes the previous answer a step further, students can come up with answers to each question and eventually wind up with everything they need to work with to craft an answer for the highest-level reflection questions.

Learning Levels (From Lower to Higher Order)	Examples of Reflection Questions
Remembering (retrieving, recognizing, recalling)	What can I remember? What did I do?
Understanding (constructing meaning)	What do I think it means? What conclusions did I come to? What are my takeaways? What did I get out of it?
Applying (extending learning to a new setting)	How could I use this [knowledge, experience] again? In what new way could this be valuable?
Analyzing (breaking material apart, seeing how the parts fit together and what the overall purpose is)	What are the different parts of this [experiment, assignment, project, experience]? As a whole, what is the purpose/main idea?
Evaluating	What has this [project, assignment, experience, experiment] taught me about myself—my strengths, my challenges? What am I proud of? What could I do better next time? What are my contributions? I used to think...but now I think...
Creating	Is there another, better way to put the pieces of this [project, assignment, experience, experiment] together? What could I [create, write, plan] next?
Another source of ideas for teaching reflection: http://www.visiblethinkingpz.org/	

Follow these tips to guide students in responding to reflection questions on learning objectives:

- Read the reflection question aloud to the class and have students rephrase the question using their own words.
- Explain that they should use the reflection question to describe what they have learned during the lesson as it relates to the learning objective.
- Review the meaning of the learning objective before students get started on their reflections.
- Refer to the examples below, which represent good responses to these types of reflection questions.

Example

Below is an example of a Principles of Accounting learning objective with example student reflection prompts and responses. You can copy and paste these examples into a Word document for students to review and discuss as a class. You can add more prompts for students to answer or customize this content to best suit your students and your goals for them.

Learning objective

Explain the importance of journalizing

Prompts and responses

Think of the assignments that you completed during this lesson. Choose one to use as your work sample as you answer the questions below.

- Explain how completing this work sample helped you to meet this learning objective. Describe the ideas and skills that you used.

I chose the general journal I completed for Sally's Surf and Scuba as my work sample. This activity gave me practice with the first stage of the accounting cycle—journalizing. I learned that without journalizing it would be difficult to determine which accounts should be debited and credited when creating the general ledger. Posting transactions in the general journal also makes it easier to find mistakes later on when the trial balance is created. The general journal is a great source of information to check the accuracy of accounting documents.

- Describe what you could improve about your work sample.

I could have double-checked my work to make certain that the transactions were properly recorded by date. A couple of financial transactions were recorded with the wrong date. I could have also improved my work sample by using better handwriting and correct spelling for the descriptions of the financial transactions so that my group members could use my general journal more easily.

Promoting Reflection in the Classroom

You can also use the following sample questions to promote a culture of reflection in your classroom— during class and small-group oral reflections, during PowerPoint presentations, and when students are having a discussion and you want to draw them out more.

- Can you discuss that more?
- Why do you think that happens?

- What evidence do you have to support that?
- Do you see a connection between this and ____?
- Does this remind you of anything else?
- How else could you approach that?
- How could you do that?