

Reflective Prompts

Reflective prompts invite students to prepare to study and regularly check their learning progress. Building habits of planning to study and monitoring gaps in learning is associated with positive gains in academic performance. Such habits strengthen *metacognitive processes* that help students manage learning and adjust to the demands of college courses. Such habits also enable students to take greater ownership of achieving their learning goals, leading to feelings of control and, ultimately, increased confidence. Instructors can use these “real-time” prompts to gain insight into their students’ academic needs and make real-time adjustments to their instruction and aligned supports.



Metacognitive processes translate those emotions and beliefs into an action plan. This includes understanding how to manage learning and actively adjust to the demands of any learning task.

Using prompts integrated at strategic moments throughout a course, students can plan the times, places, resources, and strategies for studying and adjust their learning approaches as needed. The prompts package includes three types of prompts:

1. Reflection prompts that can be used flexibly and assigned at any point during the course.
2. An assessment wrapper for use before and after a major assessment, exam, or assignment.
3. A culminating reflection in the form of a message to a future student.

Each prompt activity should take students between 10 and 20 minutes to complete.

Using Prompts in Your Teaching

The table below provides a brief overview of the three types of prompts and their frequency and timing in the course. Using multiple prompts and repeating prompts will strengthen and reinforce students’ metacognitive processes. In previous pilot studies, instructors reported that students who completed multiple prompts adjusted their learning approaches over the course of the term.

- **Reflection prompts** can be implemented at any point during the course, and the three questions can be combined into a single survey or discussion board post. They should be assigned at least twice during the term and can be repeated more often if time allows.
- The **assessment wrapper** is divided into two parts: the pre-assessment should be assigned about a week before an exam, assessment, or major assignment is due. The post-assessment should be assigned once students have received their grade and feedback on the assessment. The assessment wrapper will be most useful when assigned early in the course so that students can adjust their preparation approaches for future assessments.
- The **message to a future student** can be assigned during the final few weeks of the course. You may invite students to complete the message in a written or video format. These student-generated messages can then be integrated in future courses to motivate and encourage future students in your course.

Prompt	Student Skill	Min. Freq.
Reflection Prompts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What assignments and other coursework do you need to complete this week for this class? What information, resources, or help do you need to complete this week's coursework? • Have you scheduled a specific time to complete this week's work for this class? [If no] When will you complete this week's work for this class? • Which concepts from this class do you feel you mastered this week? Which concepts are you still struggling with? 	Plan for learning Seek help	2x/course
Assessment Wrapper <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (Pre) When and for how long do you plan to spend preparing for the assessment? • (Pre) How do you plan to prepare for this assessment? • (Pre) What challenges or barriers do you anticipate you might encounter and how might you overcome them? • (Post) Did you stick to the plan you made for yourself? What preparation strategies worked well? What challenges did you encounter when preparing? • (Post) What kinds of mistakes did you make? • (Post) Based on what you learned, name two things that you will do to prepare for the next assessment. 	Plan for learning Engage in regular self-reflection around learning progress	1x/before and after an assessment
Message to a Future Student <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What did you wish you knew going into the course? • What challenges did you face this semester and how did you overcome them? • How did you approach studying for this class? Did you have to pivot to find a more effective approach? If so, what did you do and how do you feel about having to pivot your approach? • Were there approaches that you used in the past that you found to not work for you anymore? • What did you learn about yourself as a learner? • Did you do as well as you hoped to in this course? 	Engage in regular self-reflection around learning progress Build confidence and self-efficacy as a college student	1x/end of course



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