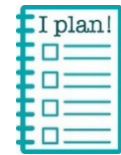


## Prompts

*Prompts are one of three evidence-based strategies developed and tested by the Postsecondary Teaching with Technology Collaborative in online STEM courses. This document provides an overview.*

By embedding prompts in courses, instructors invite students to prepare to study and regularly check their learning progress. Planning learning and engaging in self-reflection are 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. Planning and reflection also enable students to take greater ownership of achieving their learning goals, leading to feelings of control and, ultimately, increased confidence. Instructors can use information students provide in response to these prompts to gain insight into their students' academic needs and make real-time adjustments to their instruction and aligned supports.



**Prompts build students' reflection skills.** Reflection before, during, and after work requires metacognitive processes. Prompts encourage students to use these processes.

Integrating prompts at strategic moments throughout a course helps students plan the times, places, resources, choose strategies for studying, reflect on progress, and adjust their learning approaches as needed.

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

Here are three types of prompts that the Collaborative recommends. Our studies showed that when instructors use them a few times, students report increased use of key learning strategies. For prompt examples, see table below.

- **Reflective prompts** consist of three questions that can be implemented at any point during the course in the form of a single assignment, 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, a *pre-assessment* a week before an exam, assessment, or major assignment, and a *post-assessment* after students have received their grade and feedback. The assessment wrapper will be most useful when assigned early in a course so students can prepare better for future assessments.
- The **message to a future student** engages students in describing the ways they managed their learning to other students. Assigned in the final weeks of a course, students can complete it in a written or video format. Instructors can integrate them into future courses to motivate and encourage students.

Prompt Examples	Student Skill
<b>Reflective prompts:</b> What assignments and other coursework do you need to complete this week 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  Engage in regular self-reflection
<b>Assessment wrapper prompts:</b> (Pre) What challenges or barriers do you anticipate you might encounter preparing for this assessment and how might you overcome them? (Post) Did you stick to the plan you made for yourself? What preparation strategies worked well?	Plan for learning  Engage in regular self-reflection
<b>Message to a future student prompt:</b> What did you wish you knew going into the course? What did you learn about yourself as a learner? What advice do you have for a future learner?	Engage in regular self-reflection  Build confidence and self-efficacy

DRAFT



The research reported here was supported by the Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education, through Grant R305C210003 to SRI International. The opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not represent views of the Institute or the U.S. Department of Education.

To learn more about the Postsecondary Teaching with Technology Collaborative, visit the website at <https://postseccollab.org/>.