Signature Assignment Workshop

Office of Instructional Excellence

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Introduction

- Introduction
- Rationale for authenticity and reflection
- Understanding signature assignments
- Designing signature assignments
- Break
- Designing meaningful reflection prompts
- Refining and aligning assignments
- Implementing Assignments
- Wrap-up and next steps

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Signature Assessment in the Core Curriculum

Overview

Core Competencies

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Why Signature Assessment?

- Emphasizing purpose in education

- Making meaning of learning

- Generating a sense of belonging and place through creation of new knowledge

- Promoting transfer of learning, especially of durable skills as captured in the Core Competencies

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What are Signature Assessments?

Authentic & Signature Assignments: A Collaborative Discussion

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As a team, rank the 8 characteristics of authentic assessment, from most important to least important

Ashford-Rowe, et al. (2014)

What is one modification you would make to the list of characteristics based on McArthur's (2022) three principles of authenticity

Modification may include changing, adding, deleting, or re-arranging questions from the list

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Designing Signature Assignments

Overarching Goals, Ancillary Goals, & Modes of Assessment

Goal Alignment

- **Overarching Goals define learning at the highest level, framing everything that happens in the course**
    - Involves higher order thinking like *designing*, *analyzing*, *evaluating*, *predicting*, *interpreting*
    - Should be both *observable* and *concrete* – it should be clear that students can demonstrate achievement
- **Ancillary Goals (or objectives) are those intermediate goals that are important for achievement of the Overarching Goal**
    - Skill-focused: How to gather data, how to collaborate, how to communicate results, etc.
- **Assessment Modality emphasizes authentic evaluation of the overarching goal**
    - Product or Performance focused: Observable activity (or product of an activity) that transparently demonstrates to the student and instructor achievement of the goals

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Learning Objectives

A learning objective (ancillary goal) is a statement that describes the specific skills or knowledge a student will be able to demonstrate as a result of completing the learning segment.

- It must be an ACTION that can be observed
- It must be demonstrated in an artifact that can be assessed or measured using a rubric
- It helps to write it with the following stem
  – Students Will Be Able To (SWBAT)

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Objectives should be action-oriented

- Demonstrate
- Remember
- Identify
- Interpret
- Compose
- Create
- Determine

- Classify
- Order
- Organize
- Measure
- Calculate
- Synthesize
- Evaluate

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Some Examples

- **Logic: "Students should be able to reconstruct and evaluate arguments from popular and social media"**
  - An Op-Ed (written communication) *or* a group presentation (collaboration/oral communication)

- **Environmental Geology: "Students will be able to evaluate and predict the influence of geology on the severity of a natural disaster"**
  - Information and quantitative literacy to collect/interpret data
  - A collaborative multimodal presentation (collaboration, communication)

Initial Design

1. Workshop your <u>overarching goals</u> to ensure they emphasize higher order thinking and are observable and concrete

2. Identify 1-3 <u>ancillary goals</u> students will need to achieve to achieve the overarching goal(s)
    - Draw from the relevant Core Competency learning outcomes

3. Identify a few different assessment modalities that would demonstrate achievement of the overarching goal(s)
    - Access the "Authentic Assessment Products or Performances" link on the *Designing Signature Assignments* handbook page for a broad taxonomy

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Time to let the Mind Wander

Take a break

Be back in 10!

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Designing for Meaningful Reflection

The power of reflection and metacognition to supercharge learning
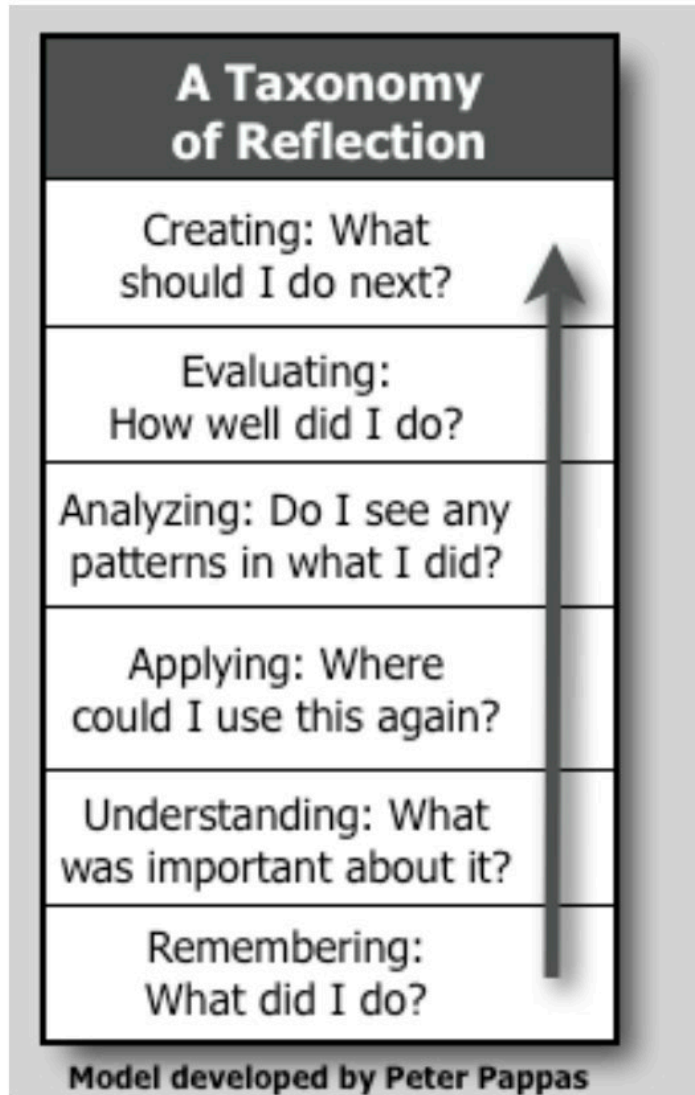
Why Reflection & Metacognition?

- Reflection: conscious exploration of one's own experiences

- Metacognition: the act of thinking about one's own thought processes

- Intertwined history of educational research on both reflection and metacognition mostly in cognitive and educational psychology

- Most often applied in experiential learning pedagogies and professional practitioners

- Student engagement is enhanced when they are made responsible for their own learning by using self-regulated learning strategies that include reflection and metacognition

- Silver, N. (2013). Reflective pedagogies and the metacognitive turn in In *Using reflection and metacognition to improve student learning: Across the disciplines, across the academy* (pp. 17). Taylor & Francis. https://www.taylorfrancis.com/chapters/edit/10.4324/9781003448570-1/reflective-pedagogies-metacognitive-turn-college-teaching-naomi-silver

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Types of Reflection & Metacognition

- Schon (1987) book "Educating the Reflective Practitioner" discussed the terms "reflection-on-action" which occurs either before or after the action and "reflection-in-action" which occurs during the action

- Metacognition has been defined as thinking about one's thinking, which is closely aligned with reflecting on one's thinking

- An assignment might be designed as a metacognitive reflection

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Taxonomy of Reflection

A Taxonomy of Reflection

Creating: What should I do next?

Evaluating: How well did I do?

Analyzing: Do I see any patterns in what I did?

Applying: Where could I use this again?

Understanding: What was important about it?

Remembering: What did I do?

Model developed by Peter Pappas

Bloom's Creating: Combining or reorganizing elements into a new pattern or structure.

Bloom's Evaluating: Making judgments based on criteria and standards.

Bloom's Analyzing: Breaking material into constituent parts, determining how the parts relate to one another and to an overall structure or purpose.

Bloom's Applying: Carrying out or using a procedure through executing, or implementing. Extending the procedure to a new setting.

Bloom's Understanding: Constructing meaning from oral, written, or graphic messages.

Bloom's Remembering: Retrieving, recognizing, and recalling relevant knowledge from short- or long-term memory.

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Critical Incident Reflections

- Critical incidents: Think about an incident (series of events) that you have observed or experienced that made you think critically about some aspect of your teaching practice.

- Come to class ready to discuss the following aspects of this incident
  - What happened and what was the outcome or resolution? (Remember)
  - Why did it happen? (Understand)
  - What are the implications for you as a teacher? (Analyze)
  - What would you do differently next time you encounter a similar situation? (Create)

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Structuring for Meaningful Reflection

- **Prompt for specificity:** Require students to identify specific work or experiences that illustrate learning or achievement.

- **Regularity:** Reflection and metacognition are skills that must be practiced and developed. Students need to be given multiple opportunities to engage in the practice.

- **Provide emotional distance:** Prompt reflection sometime after the assignment/experience is completed to encourage a more 'clear-headed' engagement.

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Some Examples

- **Self-Evaluation:** Using the criteria of success for this assignment, review your work, rate it across each dimension, and then describe the strongest part of the work and the part most in need of further development

- **Core Competency Connections:** How does this work demonstrate [core competency]?; how did you improve as a [collaborator/writer/etc] throughout this course?

- **Assessing Growth:** Review several sets of related assignments to identify 2 areas of [intellectual, emotional, etc.] growth that occurred over the semester

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Design your Reflection

1. What will students be prompted to reflect on or about?

2. How will the reflection be structured?

3. When will it occur relative to the assignment?

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Refinement & Alignment

- Iterating and Presenting

Self- and Peer-Evaluation

- **Which learning outcomes can the assignment develop and assess?**
  - Review relevant course/program, OT-36, and/or Core Competency learning outcomes

- **Rate each draft assignment across the 8+ characteristics of authentic assessment**
  - Where is the assignment strongest? What generalizations can be drawn from those parts?
  - Where does the assignment most need development?

- **Revise & Action Plan**
  - Where possible, revise the assignment now to improve where necessary
  - Where not immediately possible, generate an action plan for how you will go about improving those elements of the assignment

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Presenting to Students

- Making the <u>purpose</u> of an assignment, and its broader value, visible to students can enhance their engagement

- Clearly presenting the <u>task</u>, to the degree appropriate, increases the cognitive load students can expend on the meaningful learning activities

- Making the <u>assessment criteria</u> visible to students at the outset can lower anxiety and enhance performance, as well as promote metacognition

- The Transparency in Learning & Teaching (TILT) initiative provides a *Transparency in Assignment Design* template which can promote these goals

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Continue the Conversation

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