Reflection Activities

Below are some reflection activities you can try integrating into your classes. These are a few practical ideas or "scaffolding activities" found in the book, *Leveraging the ePortfolio for Integrative Learning* (2014). For more details on each of these, we highly recommend a complete reading of the book.

- **Opening Letters**: Introduce yourself in a welcome letter to your students. Share goals, hopes and fears for the course, etc. Have students engaged in a dialogue with you. Ask them to make connections between courses, talk about why they are taking your course, tell you their expectations, set goals for the class, etc.
- **Point out reflection**: Let students know when you see good reflection happening (in discussions, papers, etc.). Help them identify what deep reflection looks like in your course.
- **Minute Papers**: Ask students to take a few minutes at the end of class to answer a question. For example, what is the most important thing you learned today during class? What questions remain unanswered? This can be any question that will trigger or promote reflection from students.
- **Background Knowledge Probe**: Ask students two or three open-ended questions, which will probe their existing knowledge of a problem, topic, concept, etc.
- **Documented Problem Solutions**: Ask students to solve a problem (or a few problems) and document each step in the process of finding a solution in writing.
- **Directed Paraphrasing**: Have students paraphrase a part of the lesson (in their own words) for a specific audience and purpose.
- **Approximate Analogies**: Ask students to complete the second part of an analogy. For example: Writing is to critical thinking as horseshoes are to _____.
- **Application Cards**: Have students reflect by writing down one possible real-world application of what they have just learned.
- **Anticipatory Reflection:** Students write about what they expect they might learn or experience from an activity or event.
- **During an Event**: Students reflect on what is happening while they are taking action in the moment. This could be either during class or during an outside event they are participating in.
- **After an Event**: Have students write a few paragraphs about what they learned from the event or activity. Did it meet expectations? Why or why not? Did they have to overcome any obstacles? etc.
- **Defining Features Matrix**: Ask students to check off features in a table that distinguish between two or three similar concepts. This organizational representation helps students categorize ideas.
- **Mind Maps**: Helps students reflect on how concepts or ideas fit together. This is a visual representation of connections.
- **Venn Diagrams**: Help students conceptualize overlapping concepts and the relationships between ideas.

- **Think-Pair-Share**: Pair students together and ask them to discuss their observations and ideas. They can then compare and contrast what they come up with.
- **Peer Feedback**: This can be in online discussion groups or face-to-face classes. If done online, you can require students to respond to at least two comments from peers.
- **Generative Knowledge Interviewing**: One student tells their story while a second student listens and generates questions. The third person observes and takes notes. The first student then receives feedback from both the listener and observer. Roles can then be reversed.
- **Scientific method:** The scientific method naturally creates an opportunity for deep reflection as students hypothesize, carry out an experiment, and then reflect on the results and their observations.
- **Journals**: Ask students to keep a journal where they can make observations, raise questions, and self-assess their learning. This could be a field journal, a journal based off class discussions or readings, etc.