

**Wrapping Up Your Semester on a Positive Note**  
**Reflective Practice Large Group Meeting**  
**Thursday, December 4, 2014**  
**HUB Susquehanna Room**  
**3:35 to 4:50 PM**

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Snare, C. E. (2000). An alternative end-of-semester questionnaire. *PS: Political Science and Politics*, (4). 823. Retrieved from <http://navigator-iup.passhe.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=edsjsr&AN=edsjsr.10.2307.420922&site=eds-live>

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## Reflection as Learning: Helping Your Students Look Back at the Semester

You've spent over three months thinking and discussing, reading and problem-solving with your class. What did it all add up to? As the semester winds down, consider giving your students opportunities to reflect on that question. What have they learned from the class and how have they developed? You can structure these opportunities so that students solidify or deepen their knowledge, synthesize course concepts, apply them in new contexts, and become more aware of their own intellectual processes and development. Exercises in reflection can also help you assess the impact of your teaching and can prime students to write more substantive evaluations about how the course promoted their learning and growth.

Below you will find some assignments and exercises that ask students to reflect on their learning. Most of these suggestions can work with a variety of formats: having students write, discuss in pairs, discuss in small groups, or discuss with the entire class or precept.

- ✿ Ask your students how their thinking about a course topic has deepened or changed this semester.
- ✿ Distribute the outline of your syllabus, including only weekly topics and readings. Have students annotate the syllabus, noting the knowledge or concepts that they most remember for each week.
- ✿ Ask your students to describe an impact of the class that you and the rest of the class are unlikely to know about. Did any of course concepts influence a conversation outside of class? Were any ideas or skills learned in class applied in another academic context? Or in a non-academic context?
- ✿ Give your students an opportunity to reflect on how coursework prepared them for their final scholarly project for the semester. For example, Professors Bill Gleason and William Howarth have asked students which approaches or methodologies from the course (readings, lectures, labs, etc.) were most pertinent or useful in conceptualizing and completing a final project. Why? How?
- ✿ Give students up to ten minutes to write down the three most important ideas or concepts learned or skills developed. Let a few volunteers share their lists or give everyone a chance to pick one of their three items and explain it to the class. As James Lang puts it in his recent Chronicle essay, "The more people you can get to contribute, and the more varied the answers, the more students will begin to see how much they have learned."
- ✿ Give students an opportunity to articulate how newly acquired skills or knowledge might help them in future classes, professional, civic or personal life. You might simply ask "How might your learning from this class prove relevant for the future?" A more substantive assignment would ask them to take some course learning and apply it to a new context.
- ✿ Next semester, you might begin with an exercise that can be used for reflection at term's end. On the first day, have students write down what they expect or hope to learn. Collect their responses so that you can return them in one of the final classes. Ask students to reflect on whether the class fulfilled their hopes or whether they learned something they value, but did not anticipate

Reflection as Learning: Helping Your Students Look Back at the Semester. The Scholar as Teacher. The McGraw Center. Retrieved from <https://www.princeton.edu/mcgraw/library/sat-tipsheets/looking-back/Reflection-as-Learning-Helping-your-Students-Look-Back-at-the-Semester.pdf>