

Capstone Brownbag: Reflective Writing (Winter 2011)

Goal: The upcoming Capstone Brownbag on how to build effective reflective writing prompts into Capstone courses will begin with discussion and will offer an opportunity to workshop a writing prompt you would like to strengthen or revise for use in your course. The goal is to discuss crafting writing prompts that connect course materials and experiences to University Studies goals. Samples from faculty will be used to demonstrate successful prompts encouraging students to reflect more deeply, to make stronger connections between course materials and experiences, and to allow for faculty and student creativity.

Please bring a copy of a reflective writing prompt that you would like to workshop with the large group or with a partner during our Brownbag session.

1. Pinpointing Shared and Individual Goals for Capstone Reflective Writing

2. Faculty Samples

3. Elements of Effective Reflective Writing Prompts

4. Slight Creative Twists?

5. Revision & Brainstorming

● Feedback Questions for Peer Review:

- Have a peer read your reflective writing prompt. Have them restate what they think the goal/assignment is back to you. Is what the reader comprehends the same as what you intend?
- Ask any of the following questions to your peer reviewer:
 - Have your peer ask two how/why questions.
 - Have your peer describe what works best about the prompt from a reader perspective.
 - Have your peer point out any areas that might confuse or that could use clarification from a reader perspective.
 - Have your peer discuss what kind of framework appears to be used and how this might impact the student responder.
 - Have your peer discuss any connections they see to University Studies goals.
 - Have your peer discuss their feeling (again, as a reader) about what kind of student investment is requested.
 - End with a complement!

OR

● Instructor-Based Inquiry

- Make a list of 5 questions you'd like answered in response to your reflective writing prompt.
- Give these to a peer.
- Discuss his/her responses in a conversation that focuses on your goals for student responses.

- Your discussion question should ask students to consider one or more of the linked articles in comparison/contrast to one or more of the essays from Section IV in *City Kids/City Schools*.

Sample 5 (Journal)

1. Concisely detail your hands-on volunteer work this week, your involvement with lesson planning/implementation, and your progress and individual efforts on the research-based group project.
2. As we near the end of the term, we will focus on larger reflections on our learning. This week, please read the linked reading "Creating Cultural Connections. Focus in particular on the information detailing "Development of Intercultural Sensitivity/Experience of Difference" and the section on privilege.
3. How does this reading connect for you to your experience of your community partnership? Have you had any moments where your understanding of difference shifted or changed? Have you had any moments where your understanding of privilege shifted or changed? Have your ideas stayed the same or strengthened? Refer directly to moments in the reading on privilege and on intercultural sensitivity. Where do you stand in your own thinking and work in these areas?

Sample 6 (Reading Response)

1. Read Chapter 3 our second course text – *Political Agendas for Education, Fourth Edition*. In addition, read the Week 7 Reading links (articles and websites) on the most powerful Oregon teacher's union, the merit pay debate, and grassroots organizing.
2. Choose to reflect on any TWO of the following prompts in preparation for class discussion:
3. Read through information on the "Oregon Education Association" website. Compare what you read on this website to the text's information about teacher's unions. What is the mission of the OEA? Do you agree or disagree with the role of unions in forming our education system? What is the sense you get of the work the union does for schools and teachers? Are there any red flags?
4. Read the two Week 7 Reading Links that have to do with merit pay. Compare what you read in the text on the merit pay debate and what you read in the Oregon articles on linking student achievement to teacher pay. What do you think about this debate? What are the dangers? What are the benefits?
5. Read through the Week 7 Reading link on Stand for Children's "Innovation Action Center." What is the difference between actions taken by a teacher's union and actions taken by a non-partisan grassroots organization dedicated to bettering education in Oregon? Which movement do you feel more comfortable or aligned with? Why?
6. Read the section in our text on the debate over control of teacher certification. Then, browse online for information about Oregon teacher certification programs. What do you see? Should there be more defined standards? Should standards vary state by state or be federally mandated? Why or why not?
7. NOTE: Please do bring a copy of your response to class so that you can refer to it in class discussion.

Sample 8 (Journal)

What criteria will you use to determine if you have been effective with your team, your Chiapas community partner? In other words, how will you evaluate yourself at the end of the time in Chiapas? Please include a personal goal for yourself.

University Studies Goals

1. Inquiry and Critical Thinking

Students will learn various modes of inquiry through interdisciplinary curricula—problem-posing, investigating, conceptualizing—in order to become active, self-motivated, and empowered learners.

2. Communication

Students will enhance their capacity to communicate in various ways—writing, graphics, numeracy, and other visual and oral means—to collaborate effectively with others in group work, and to be competent in appropriate communication technologies.

3. The Diversity of Human Experience

Students will enhance their appreciation for and understanding of the rich complexity of the human experience through the study of differences in ethnic and cultural perspectives, class, race, gender, sexual orientation, and ability.

4. Ethics and Social Responsibility

Students will expand their understanding of the impact and value of individuals and their choices on society, both intellectually and socially, through group projects and collaboration in learning communities.