

Working Toward Metacognition

OVERVIEW

Adapted from “Lesson 10: Analyzing Thinking Processes” in Dixon, Chris Jennings. *Lesson Plans for Teaching Writing*. National Council of Teachers of English NCTE, 2007.

In the original lesson, this is a three-paper project assigned as a group used at the beginning of the semester, designed “so that students write papers of various degrees of complexity in sequence”. I have used the prompts as Discussion Board posts of a few-paragraphs each, and as a set of essays toward the end of a semester. They would also be good for journal prompts or as reflections between larger projects and may be adapted to your specific classroom needs.

PHASES

TEACHER GUIDE

STUDENT GUIDE

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OBJECTIVES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage critical thinking in writing • Support students in reflection activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflect upon individual experiences and thinking processes • To consider past, present, and future goals in education • Practice introspection and metacognitive writing
SUGGESTED MATERIALS	<p>Depending on how you format or use the prompts, you may need:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A sample reflection on a past K-12 educational experience • A sample self-reflection • A sample Essay on Education (for example, “A Solution for when a Nation’s Schools Fail” by Nicholas Krisof and the New York Times: https://www.nytimes.com/2017/07/15/opinion/sunday/bridge-schools-liberia.html) • Ted Ed or Ted Talk Videos on Education, like “How to Learn? From Mistakes” by Diana Laufenberg (https://ed.ted.com/lessons/how-to-learn-from-mistakes-diana-laufenberg#review) 	<p>Students may want to have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brainstormed list of pivotal K-12 experiences • Prewriting on themselves as a student • Discussed ideas of education/post-secondary education in groups or with class

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<p>INTRODUCTION TO PROMPTS</p>	<p>It is good to preface the essays with a look back on yourself and how you view education. This is what I post to my students:</p> <p><i>“As an instructor, I obviously have many fond memories of my own education- and some not-so-fond- that all influence my teaching and learning even now. Would you believe that I once threw up in the middle of a public speech? Or that I almost failed a marketing class because it met at 8am? I may have a love for reading and writing, but I actually hated my high school English classes. I didn't realize I could be a teacher until I had graduated from my university with a degree I was not sure about. All of these experiences still influence how I see the world and view education as a whole.”</i></p>	<p>Students may discuss what they think of when hearing words like “education”, “learning”, “school”, etc.</p>
<p>PROMPT 1</p>	<p>Teachers should assign the following for the first assignment/journal/essay, etc.:</p> <p>Write a paper about some incident that happened to you during high school or your K-8 years. What memories stick out in your mind? For example, a heartbreaker game you lost at the last minute, a field trip, an encounter with a teacher you liked or didn't like. Make sure you use as much detail and description as possible! In your conclusion, discuss how you feel about the incident now. Do you think it influences you today?</p>	<p>Students should brainstorm and outline regarding their experience before beginning the assignment</p> <p>If available, students can discuss a sample K-12 reflective essay</p> <p>Students may review grammar structures relevant to writing in the past, giving description, and narration</p>

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<p>PROMPT 2</p>	<p>Teachers should assign the following for the second assignment/journal/essay, etc.:</p> <p>Write an introspective paper about yourself as a student. What do you think are your strong areas? Your weak ones? Explain with examples how you developed these characteristics. You can focus on one subject specifically (ex. What you are strong/weak at in writing) or on being a student as a whole. What do you think you could improve on?</p>	<p>Students should brainstorm or outline regarding themselves as students before writing.</p> <p>If available, students can discuss a sample self-reflection.</p> <p>Students may review or practice using pronouns (I vs. you vs. we) and avoiding vague language- https://www.blinn.edu/writing-centers/pdfs/Vague-Words-Tables.pdf?fbclid=IwAR0IXij7bwxqamoeIeLyZgNaydSIDXbp51cQ1YvENT5gdzLCrXMd-EmyVAE</p>
<p>PROMPT 3</p> <p>**NOTE- IT MAY BE APPROPRIATE TO REWORD THESE PROMPTS TO ADJUST TO YOUR INDIVIDUAL STUDENTS. AS LONG AS THE PROMPT IS ENCOURAGING THEM TO THINK ABOUT EDUCATION AND/OR WHY THEY THINK THE WAY THE DO, IT WILL ACHIEVE THE PURPOSE OF PRACTICING METACOGNITION**</p>	<p>Teachers should assign the following as the last assignment in the sequence:</p> <p>Please do not use the word "I" in this paper and write in the third person (Students should... Education should...). Write about one or more of the following questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Why should a college education be different from high school?2. Why is it important for schools to ask students to think about why they think the way they do?3. Why is it important for students to keep learning throughout their lives?4. What should a student know by the time he or she graduates from high school? From college?5. How can an education help people think more clearly when forming opinions?	<p>Students should brainstorm or outline their ideas of education before writing.</p> <p>To introduce ideas of education, consider assigning a reading on education or a Ted-Talk (see suggested materials)</p> <p>Students may review or practice using third person in writing and making arguments in writing.</p>

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	<p>6. Why is it important for people or students to learn how to examine their own ideas?</p> <p>7. How are ways that we can learn outside of the classroom? Is "school" or "college" the best place to learn?</p>	
SUMMARY	<p>I have had students present one or more of these reflections in a portfolio assignment, or in discussion in class or online. It is helpful to consider their future education goals post-high school in relation to these thoughts on themselves in education and learning in general.</p>	