

# Critical Reflection, Goals, Narrative Evaluation, and Creating Pathways



**FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS  
FROM THE HAMPSHIRE LEARNING  
PROJECT**

**HLP.HAMPSHIRE.EDU (INFORMATION)  
TV.HAMPSHIRE.EDU (VIDEOS)**

# Asked



- Share data – what we are learning
- Give suggestions – what it might mean for practice
- Write a specific set of tips

# Purposes of self-evaluation/reflection



- Reflection improves learning
  - Goal setting
  - Monitoring one's own progress
  - Identifying learning strategies that work
  - Making connections among experiences
  - Seeing change over time
  - Identifying interests/setting a path

# Student use of self evaluations



- **Some very strong students learn to use self evaluation to:**
  - Identify strengths
  - Identify areas for growth
  - See connections among courses/ideas
  - Set new Paths
- **Many other students see self evaluations as**
  - Superficial or busy work
  - A way to remind faculty who they are
  - Prove that they showed up and did the work

# Very few students



- Were told why we do self evaluation
- Were taught how to do self evaluation
- Were prompted to look across their self evaluations (or narrative evaluations) to set new goals

# Improving self evaluation



- Give students specific instructions in self evaluation (See example in handout or other examples on CTL site)
  - Remind them about course goals/what you hoped they would know, understand, or be able to do
  - Prompt to think about their own goals for the course
  - Prompt to think about the connections to their Divisional work
  - Prompt to think about their improvement and their challenges
- Make it clear that the purposes of self evaluation is to aid their *learning*

# Use of Narrative Evaluation



- **Similarly**
  - Few students looked across narrative evaluations for patterns or to set goals – until the end of Div II
  - When students did look across their evaluations, they found it instructive

# Narrative Evaluations



- What helps students use them:
  - Having goals written on the syllabus (students know what to focus on)
  - Ask students to look across their narrative evaluations from prior semester
  - Narrative evaluations that make it clear what a student did well and what they still need to work on (i.e. evaluative rather than descriptive)

# More descriptive evaluation



In their first paper, Alex makes an argument that all classroom teachers ought to understand the literature on the science of learning. They claim that: a) engaging students' prior knowledge is a prerequisite for building new knowledge, b) students must have opportunity to make rich connections among their ideas, and c) students must be taught the strategies for success.

# More evaluative evaluation



In their first paper, Alex describes some major findings from the science of learning. Their paper is clear and describes classroom reality in a way that rings true, but Alex falls short in substantiating their claims using the literature. This is an area for improvement ...

# Conclusion - Recommendations



- Tell students why we do self evaluation
- Give students instruction in self evaluation
- Write course goals on syllabi
- Write narrative evaluations that point out strengths and challenges/next steps
- Ask students to look across narrative evaluations and self evaluations to set new goals

## **Guide to Writing Self-Evaluations**

### **Hampshire College Center for Teaching and Learning**

At Hampshire, we ask you to engage in self-evaluation because we know that it is a powerful tool to aid learning. Self-evaluation is not simply about reporting how hard you worked (though working hard is important). Self-evaluation is a tool for reflecting on and guiding your learning. Reflection can lead to deeper understanding of your strengths and areas for improvement; it can help you set goals, and find your academic path. Reflection helps you look backward at who you have been as a learner and think forward about who you want to be as a learner. It can help you find new patterns of engagement with your work, so that you become a more active learner,

Here are some questions to guide your written self-evaluations. You don't have to write about every one of these for every course, but these kinds of questions lead to more meaningful reflection.

What were your goals for the course? Consider the following:

- Look back at the goals on the course syllabus
- Think about the reasons you took the course – what were your own goals for your learning?
- Think about your Divisional work – what are your questions, what skills did you hope to develop?

How did the course help you move forward with your goals?

What were your major accomplishments? In what ways did you make progress?

What helped you make progress?

What might you still be struggling with?

What are the strengths you want to build on?

Have your goals changed as a result of the course? (That is, do you have new questions, new skills or abilities you want to develop, new connections to explore, etc.?)

Has the course transformed your thinking or your abilities in any way?

For other examples visit

<http://sites.hampshire.edu/ctl/>

# Questions, Comments, Discussion