

Session I: 11:30 – 12:15 p.m.




PRESENTERS

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 **Faculty & Student Engagement**

Reflection Journals - Examples of Using this Powerful Tool to Help Students Synthesize Course Content

DESCRIPTION

For new and experienced online instructors, or those who work with them, this interactive session will share examples of well received reflection journal assignments from online courses at Columbia University. The presenters will open by touching on research on the value of reflection journals, sample uses of reflection journal assignments, and how to provide instructor feedback and grading to deepen student work on future journal entries while maintaining a feasible instructor workload. Next, the presenters will share examples of reflection journal assignment instructions, grading rubrics, and lessons learned from two online courses. Finally, the presenters will facilitate a chat-based discussion to encourage the session participants to share their experiences, advice, and questions.

Most learning management systems, including Blackboard and Canvas, include a journal tool. This session will help instructors share and spark ideas of ways to use this tool effectively in their own online courses, regardless of the course topic or academic discipline.

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**Reflection Journals - Examples of using this powerful tool to
help students synthesize course content**

Matthea Marquart and Beth Counselman Carpenter

September 24, 2018, 11:30 AM-12:15PM CST / 12:30PM-1:15PM EST



Your Presenters



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What's in this for you?

- Discussion of value and uses of reflection journal assignments
- Presentation of example reflection journal assignments
- Discussion of grading and providing feedback on reflection journal assignments



- Share your strategies

- Ask questions

- Add to your toolkit

AGENDA

1	Welcome and agenda
2	Introductions and polls - What brought you to this session? And what's your experience with reflection journals?
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4	Example #1: Reflection journals in a course on gender and sexuality
5	Example #2: Reflection journals in a course on racial identity development
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7	Wrap up and Q&A

How to Participate in this Session

We'd love to hear your thoughts and see your active engagement throughout this session via:

- Chat
- Polls

Note: We have planned this session to be interactive without the use of participant webcam or mic.

Polls

- What brought you to this session today?
- How much experience do you have with reflection journal assignments?

What brought you to this session today? (you can ch... ☰

[View Votes](#) [Edit](#) [End Poll](#)

What brought you to this session today? (you can choose as many as apply)

<input type="checkbox"/>	General curiosity	<div style="width: 0%;"></div>	0%	(0)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Someone forced me to attend but I will make the best of it even though I am not that interested	<div style="width: 0%;"></div>	0%	(0)
<input type="checkbox"/>	I am here to criticize, so please be as terrible as possible	<div style="width: 0%;"></div>	0%	(0)
<input type="checkbox"/>	I have been thinking of using reflection journals in my courses and want to share some ideas	<div style="width: 0%;"></div>	0%	(0)
<input type="checkbox"/>	I have used reflection journals before and want to share my ideas and experiences	<div style="width: 0%;"></div>	0%	(0)
<input type="checkbox"/>	I came to learn from other participants	<div style="width: 0%;"></div>	0%	(0)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (please tell us more in chat)	<div style="width: 0%;"></div>	0%	(0)

Broadcast Results

Click on as many as apply

Introductions - Type into Chat

Please share:

- Your city, school, and how you're feeling
- What do you think makes a good reflection journal assignment?

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Literature Recap & Current Research

The process of reflection in higher learning has been shown to:

- ❖ Improve student self-awareness as a learner.
- ❖ Gives students improved self-direction to change their learning process.
- ❖ Deepens the learning experience.
- ❖ Well-suited for adult learners.
- ❖ Students who are have little experience in reflective writing and receive minimal guidance reflect at lower levels, particularly in early reflective tasks.
- ❖ Typically used in the fields of: health sciences, particularly nursing; behavioral sciences, particularly psychology; education & business.

Proposed Learning Outcomes of Reflection Journals

Adapted from Langley & Brown (2010).

Professional Development:

- How is the student linking the personal self and their professional role?
- Allows for the student to practice critical analysis that can then translate to professional practice.

Personal Growth:

- Allows for students to name their strengths and weaknesses.
- Allows for students to develop insight into their personalities.

Empowerment:

- RJ allows for improved cognitive and affective synthesis of course materials and ideas which can improve student self confidence (Hiemstra, 2001).
- RJ encourages consideration of personal values, ethical conflicts, political issues and solution development strategies (Hubbs & Brand, 2005).

Facilitation of the learning process:

- How students integrate the material.

Identified challenges to using reflective journals

- ❖ Students may respond superficially ('dialing it in').
- ❖ Student perception that it is overused as an assignment ('journalled to death').
- ❖ Journal use as a way of marginalizing, oppressing or attacking others.
- ❖ Writing 'towards' the teacher rather than expressing actual, personal opinion.
- ❖ Clear assignment structure, purpose and assessment rubrics.
- ❖ Overall evaluation assessment challenges.

Helping questions for assignment design

It is important to categorize reflection journals as *Experiential Learning*.

Adapted from Clarkeburn & Kettula (2012) & Dymant & O'Connell (2010):

1. How do your students approach the reflection process and what are the influences on how they reflect?
2. What about the pedagogical design and the assessment rubric will support the process of student reflection?
3. What is required to make assessment of the journals a reliable, valid and manageable process?
4. What is the EXACT purpose of your journal?
5. How does this journal fit into your overall course design?

Connection to High-Impact Educational Practices

Adapted from <https://www.aacu.org/resources/high-impact-practices>

What are High-Impact Educational Practices (HIPs)?

According to the Association of American Colleges & Universities, HIPs benefit college students across backgrounds, particularly historically underserved students, who often do not have equitable access to high-impact learning, and increase student retention and student engagement

How do reflection journals connect?

- **Writing-Intensive Courses:** Writing at all levels of instruction, for different audiences, in different disciplines, and across the curriculum
- Can also connect to **e-portfolios**, **capstone projects**, and topics of **diversity**

Your turn

There are two new chat pods here -- please share within the appropriate chat pod, and please respond to each other

- Chat 1: What value do you see / might you see in using reflection journal assignments for your discipline and courses?
- Chat 2: How do you use / might you use reflection journal assignments for your discipline and courses?

When one might use reflection journals (1 of 2)

- Does your field of instruction value ***knowing-in-action***: the “know-how” a practitioner reveals while performing an action?
 - K-I-A demonstrates a certain level of advanced competency.
- Does your course material highlight self-reflection, validation from the instructor, or testing development of an action plan?
 - Journal writing allows for the instructor to develop a more intimate knowledge as to how students may be struggling with difficult situations in the field, or difficult material.
- Does your course material facilitate students and instructors as co-creators of knowledge?
- Does your field of instruction promote growth through cognitive dissonance?

When one might use reflection journals (2 of 2)

- When the topic is too private / too sensitive for a discussion forum
- When reflection is more important than discussion
- When academic writing is not a priority for the assignment
- When discussion in a group would benefit from prior thought as individuals
- When preparing for an in-class activity
- When supporting retention of class materials and creating connections between multiple activities
- When a quick assignment with no right answer might support student success

Example:

- In a discipline with historic under-representation of particular groups - describe a historical figure from our field with whom you can identify

Sample assignment from CSSW's Institute on Pedagogy and Technology for Online Courses

Now that you've done this week's assignments and participated in this week's live session, consider what you've learned or thought about. Reflect on at least one topic or learning from the week's assignments and from the week's live session.

Your reflection is due on Monday morning at 9am EST / 6am PST. You can type directly into Canvas or submit this as a Word document.

The points for this assignment will be for:

- Submitting your reflection on time (2 points)
- Writing at least one paragraph (2 points)
- Reflecting on at least one topic or learning from the week's assignments (3 points)
- Reflecting on at least one topic or learning from the week's live session (3 points)

For a reminder of why reflection is important for educators, you may want to review the week 1 reading on critically reflective teaching and why it's important.

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Example from the field: Gender and Sexuality

Rubric:

The journals were worth a total of 35 points (percent) of their final grade. Each journal was weighted at 7 points, and the following points were evaluated: thorough summary of media, connection to practice/clinical experience, self reflection. Each week, students were asked the same set of questions (included in the following slide).

One excerpt from a student's evolution throughout the semester:

“Lastly, I selected three videos to view for this final media reflection. After watching the “Growing Up Coy” documentary last week, I was really curious about the transgender identity. This is something I used to find scary, as it was the “other” and so greatly stigmatized, so I wanted to expose myself and learn even more; education is the best repellent of fear!”

Assignment: Each week for the first 5 weeks, students were required to reflect on certain media chosen by the teaching team. The final week, students selected 3 of their own media choices, shared the links and reflected on those.

Reflection questions:

- Please identify your level of exposure to this topics prior to this week's assignments.
- How this media related or differed from your multiple identities?
- How does this knowledge influence your social work practice?
- How did this material intersect with your personal values and your social work professional values?
- What questions did this bring up for you? (please list in bullet point format).
- DO NOT WRITE A SUMMARY OF THE READINGS AND THE MEDIA

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Example from the field: Racial Identity Development

7-week, 1.5-credit course for first-year, second-semester students in a MSW program

Reflection journal assignments:

- Called “Applying the readings reflection assignment”
- Allowed for private reflection on the week’s theme and readings
- Prepared students for class participation
- Reflection journals were assigned during weeks 1-6; in week 7 there was no reflection so students could focus on the final assignment
- Counted toward $\frac{1}{3}$ of the course grade, along with class participation and the multi-step final assignment

Sample assignment for the weekly theme: Introduction

This week, please do the readings below and then listen to the podcast "Our national conversation about conversations about race, episode #1704: What have we learned?" [HERE](#). This episode is the final episode of the podcast, and the hosts have a discussion in which they reflect on what it's been like for them to talk about issue of race, and what they've learned from all of the conversations.

In your written reflection (1-2 paragraphs max), due Tuesday at 11:59pm EST, respond to these prompts:

- The podcast hosts have an open discussion about what it takes to have productive conversations about race, as well as where they ran into trouble. In this course, we'll be having conversations about race for seven weeks, both in discussion forums and in our classes. What's something from the podcast that you'd like us to take into account during our course, to help make our conversations as productive as possible?
- Have you ever had a productive conversation about race? If yes, what made it productive? If no, what's gotten in the way?
- Connect your response to one of this week's readings.

The points for this assignment will be for:

- Submitting your reflection on time (1 point)
- Sharing something from the podcast that you'd like us to take into account when having conversations about race in this course (3 points)
- Reflecting on past conversations you've had about race (3 points)
- Connecting your ideas to one of the readings (3 points)

Follow-up in class

Your thoughts: what works

- Respect / Validate other's experiences
- Disagree without being hurtful
- Acknowledge others' experience / opinions / feelings as valid
- Ask questions / Give others a chance to explain emotional reactions
- Listen / Step back / "Listen to listen and not to fight"
- Create a positive climate
- Be open / Keep an open mind / Try not to judge / Be open to different perspectives
- Self-awareness / Acknowledge that we'll experience moments of "self-challenge" / Consider one's own privilege / Being aware of one's tone / Recognize one's own biases & prejudices
- Pay attention to the process
- Acknowledge the consequences of our words or actions, regardless of intent
- Take a break and remember that we like each other
- Use "I" statements
- Show appreciation when people share
- Consider historical, social, cultural, intersectional implications
- Be honest, e.g. when you don't know
- Acknowledge that nobody knows everything there is to know about race
- Focus on what someone did, vs. what they are / Hold each other accountable

Your thoughts: what can get in the way

- Overgeneralizations / Stereotypes
- Fear of losing privilege / Fear of "self-challenge"
- Fear of the taboo of talking about race / Fear of saying something offensive without realizing it
- Fear of discomfort or being vulnerable or being ashamed / Fear of one's own ignorance / Fear of others seeing one's own ignorance
- Inexperience with talking about nuances regarding race, or having challenging conversations about race
- Ignoring race / Avoiding talking about race
- Not being able to see each others' faces in an online discussion
- Telling other people what they should feel / Invalidating others' experiences & feelings / Ignoring or silencing others' past experiences
- Talking over each other / Yelling / Blaming people in the conversation / Not hearing the other point of view
- Confusion about whose responsibility it is to dismantle white supremacy
- Exhaustion / Frustration / Conversations are emotionally charged
- Ignoring the role of history
- Expecting people to speak for their whole race
- Excluding people from the conversation due to their race

Full-group discussion and setting of community agreements:

- What agreements would be helpful in establishing a sense of professionalism, leadership, and respect this semester?

Sample assignment for the weekly theme: Timing of Lives

This week we're considering how timing of lives impacts racial identity. Please do the readings and then watch/listen to one of these videos/podcasts:

- Option 1: Video by The Guardian: Radical Brownies: Berets, badges, Black Lives Matter and social justice: the youth group for activist girls of colour [HERE](#)
- Option 2: Podcast: Mashup Americans Episode 36: You're Gonna Marry Who? What happens when a Nigerian Catholic marries a Long Island Jew [HERE](#)
- Option 3: PBS Video: The Talk - Race in America (named for the talk that parents give to their children of color about interactions with the police) [HERE](#)
- Option 4: Four short videos about the impact of race on students at Columbia.

In your written reflection (2-3 paragraphs), due Tuesday at 11:59pm EST, respond to these prompts:

1. Which of the options did you choose, and why? What's something your choice made you think about?
2. Reflect on how where you are in the timing of your life is currently impacting your racial identity. For example, are you at a time of life when you or your friends are choosing life partners, and does race factor into those choices? Do you have children, and are they exploring their own racial identities or asking questions about race? Are you exploring your racial identity for the first time? Are your graduate school studies impacting your racial identity? Identify risk and protective factors related to how the timing of your life impacts your racial identity.
3. Connect your response to at least one of the readings

Sample rubric for the weekly theme: Timing of Lives

The points for this assignment will be for:

- Submitting your reflection on time (1 point)
- Sharing something that the video/podcast made you think about (3 points)
- Reflecting on how your time of life is impacting your racial identity (3 points)
- Connecting your ideas to at least one of the readings (3 points)

Follow-up in class

Review Polls



- What do you remember from our last class?
- Which did you choose?
 - Radical Brownies: Berets, badges, Black Lives Matter and social justice: the youth group for activist girls of colour
 - Mashup Americans Episode 36: You're Gonna Marry Who? What happens when a Nigerian Catholic marries a Long Island Jew
 - The Talk - Race in America
 - Four short videos about the impact of race on students at Columbia



Themes from this week's Applying the Readings reflection

- For those who chose the four videos about the impact of race on students at Columbia, two overall reactions: 1) yes, this resonates with my experience, 2) surprise that these negative experiences could be happening at a place like Columbia
- Graduate school coursework & fieldwork is bringing students out of their comfort zones, causing self-reflection & examination of own race / biases / privilege
- Graduate school is increasing sense of urgency around developing knowledge around race / power / privilege
- Increased thinking about racial identity / issues of race stimulated by:
 - Transitioning to a new stage of adulthood
 - Thinking about current children / younger relatives, or planning for potential future children
 - Looking for a life partner, or being in a social circle in which many are finding life partners (particularly questions about why so many people partner with someone of their own race)
 - Current or past mixed-race relationships, or relationships with social justice-minded partners
 - Moving to a new community
 - Thinking about future jobs / career
 - Reflecting back on earlier stages of life

Small-group discussion questions:

1. What's something going on now in the time of your life that's impacting your racial identity?
2. What are protective factors you have access to now?

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Your turn

There are two new chat pods here -- please share within the appropriate chat pod, and please respond to each other

- Chat 1: Your favorite strategies for engaging journal questions, assignment instructions, managing workload, etc.
- Chat 2: Your biggest challenges (and solutions)

Best practices and managing workload

Grading journals can be time-consuming from the instructor perspective. Best practices include:

- Designing clear assignment language.
- Disseminating a clear grading rubric that highlights depth of thought rather than censoring student expression.
 - Atkins and Murray (1993) provide a 3 stage grading model for assessing level of reflectivity.
- Submitted journals should always be graded before the next one is due so that students have the time to process (and possibly respond) to feedback.

To save time, you can have students ****star**** their top three passages or their most significant reflections (upon re-reading the journal). You can also use this as the most weighted assignment in the class.

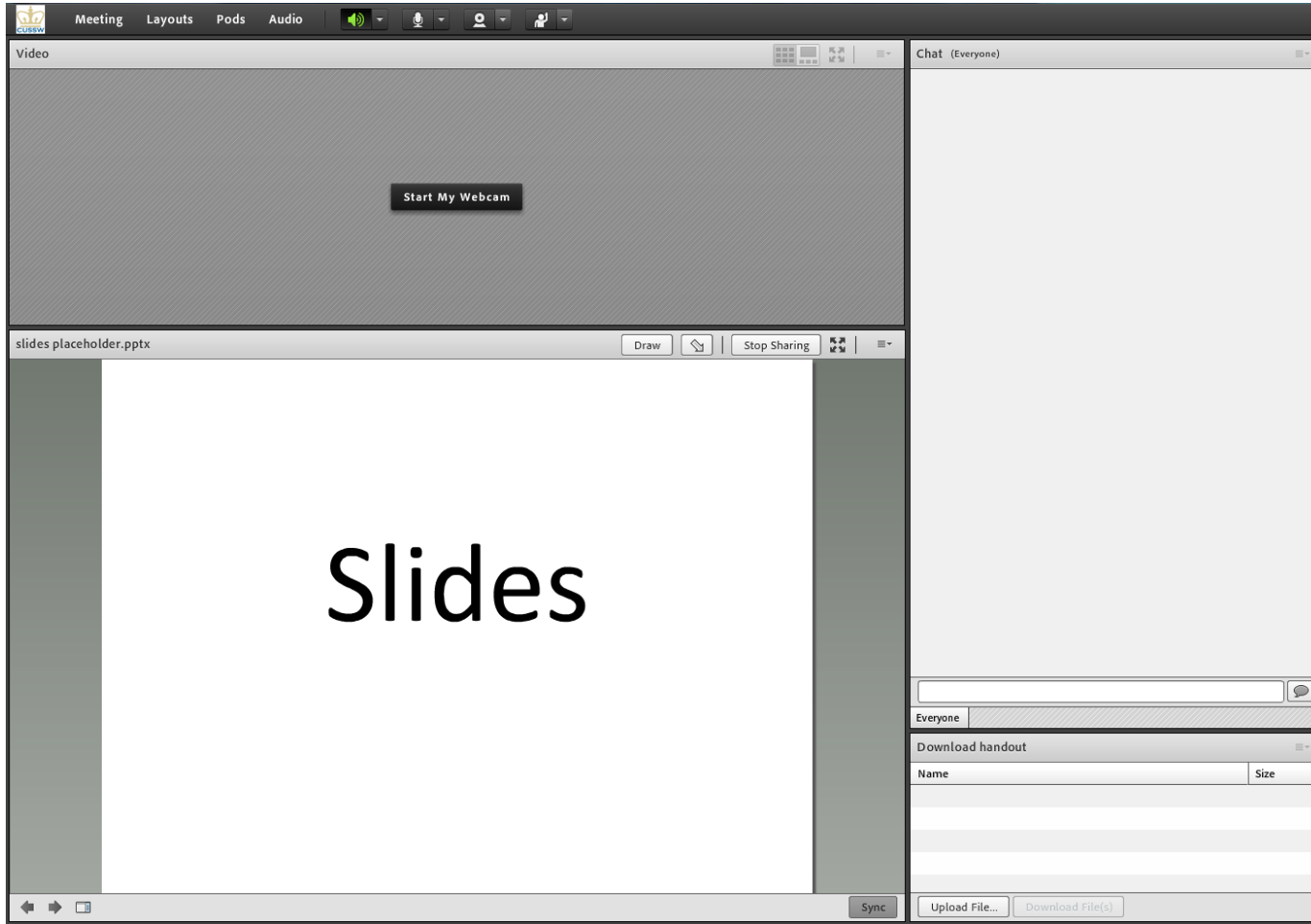
Strategies for success

1. Use a sample of a reflection journal that you have created to model what you are looking for.
2. Be very clear at the beginning of the semester as to submission dates, assignment expectations, the grading rubric and turn-around time for feedback.
3. Set aside consistently weekly grading time for optimal schedule management.
4. Facilitate icebreakers and other ways of community building in your virtual classroom, with some level of self-disclosure appropriate to your course, to help facilitate **trust** in your learning environment.
5. Have fun with the assignment!

AGENDA

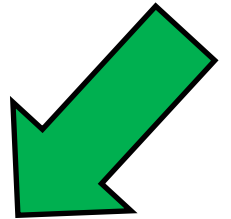
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How to download a PDF of the slides



The screenshot shows the Adobe Connect meeting interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with 'Meeting', 'Layouts', 'Pods', and 'Audio' options, along with icons for video, audio, and chat. Below this is a 'Video' window with a 'Start My Webcam' button. The main content area displays a slide titled 'slides placeholder.pptx' with the word 'Slides' in large black text. To the right is a 'Chat (Everyone)' window. At the bottom of the chat window, there is a file list titled 'Download handout' with columns for 'Name' and 'Size'. The file list is currently empty. At the bottom of the chat window, there are buttons for 'Upload File...' and 'Download File(s)'. A green arrow points from the text instructions on the right towards the 'Download File(s)' button.

1. Click on file name
2. Click “Download File”



References

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Q&A

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- *All of you for your fantastic session participation!*
- Peter Eggebraaten
- Kimberly Garrett
- Peiyi Woo
- Kristin Garay
- Rebecca Chung
- Steven Schinke
- Craig Schwalbe
- Jackie Martinez
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- 2018 Education Beyond Tomorrow Conference
- Columbia University School of Social Work
- Southern Connecticut State University's School of Health and Human Services
- Sandy Bulmer