TiF 2018: Improving Reflective Practice

1. Mary Ryan 2013 Scaffold
2. FW2016 Reflective Assignment + Results
3. FW2017 Reflective Assignment + Results
4. The Rubric

Jon Sufrin, Writing Dept. LA&PS
1. **Reporting:** What happened, and why is it relevant? (A Critical Incident)

2. **Relating:** Have I seen this before? What skills or experience do I have to help me make sense of it?

3. **Reasoning:** What have others (especially academics) said about this? How can I use this to guide my own thoughts?

4. **Reconstructing:** Combine exp. (lvl 2) with theory (lvl 3) to suggest changes to help subject/others?

A good reflective response includes each level, not just “Level 3” or “Level 4”.

Mary Ryan Scaffold (2013)
Recent Research Project: Assignment Design

- Must use a specific quote to represent main Idea, *CIQ*
- 15% overall. Designed to reward lecture/tutorial attendance, appeal to strategic and deep learners
- 5 reflective paragraphs each term (1/week): written/online. Pass/Fail, 10 x 1% = 10%
- At the end of each term, one 2-page reflection paper (2 x 2.5% = 5%)
- Graded according to course criteria, depth, *CI questions*
Recent Research Project: Context

- Gen Ed – WRIT 1702 (Becoming a Better Writer) (100)
- Discussed in lecture, Week 2
- Answered questions at tutorial level and for TAs
- Reminded at the end of term, 10+ min discussing end of term paper.
## FW2016 Project Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Level 1</th>
<th>Level 1 &amp; 2</th>
<th>Levels 1 - 3</th>
<th>Level 1 &amp; 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Online</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>39.7%</td>
<td>48.3%</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
<td>10.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wkly</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>41.7%</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wkly</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term 1</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>27.9%</td>
<td>45.9%</td>
<td>9.8%</td>
<td>16.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wkly</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>34.6%</td>
<td>43.6%</td>
<td>10.3%</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wkly</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term 2</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>60.7%</td>
<td>28.6%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>10.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- No Level 4’s. Low consent levels to use results
Recent Research Project: Results

Student Interviews:

- Busy
- Got confused with all the reflections
- Didn’t know what I wanted
- Dislike reflections generally
- Didn’t feel comfortable posting online, doesn’t want to debate or discuss ideas
- Some people failed b/c did not do reflections!
Reflective Practice: Theory, cont’d

“Some researchers have found that reflective writing results in “descriptive accounts of the students learning activities completed with the purpose of pleasing the professor”

(Boutet, Vandette and Valiquette-Tessier, 2017, p. 9)

See also: (McIntosh 2010); (Harris 2008); (Lew & Schimdt, 2006, 2011); (Maguire et al., 2001).
Reflective Practice: Theory, cont’d

Ryan 2013 & Coulson & Harvey 2013: reflective assignments need **scaffolding**:

✓ “Critical reflection is not an intuitive skill...[and can] lead to limited or superficial reactions.” (Ryan 2013)
Reflective Practice: Theory, cont’d

Scaffolding, cont’d:

✓ No guarantees! Takes practice, and a course you can reteach

✓ Deliberate attention to the teaching of the reflective writing genre

✓ Adapted weekly aiming for Stages 1-2, and term = stages 3 & 4, using weekly as evidence.
Lessons Learned

- Explained theory & purpose of assignment (TAs too!)
- Put Ryan (2013) on the course and discussed in lecture/tutorial
- CIQ a *starting point*
- Simplified to written only
- Student model discussed
- Clear deadlines, multiple pts in the term, feedback
- Practiced reflective writing + formative assessment
Reflective Assessment: Considerations

• Reflective work focuses on wisdom, not intelligence.
• Even more subjective than normal marking. Assessing the quality of reflection is difficult, especially when the reflections are personal!
  • Ryan (2013) and similar reflective scales help codify, but two reasonable people can disagree!
Reflective Assessment

• Also, what to do with a paper that spends 95% of its time at Level 1, and has 1-2 sentences at level 2?
• How about a superior Level 1-2 paper, that demonstrates an incredible depth of insight but has no theory?
• The more we can make our criteria conscious and visible, the more we can help students.

Create a Rubric!!
Rubric

- Adapted from Ryan (2013) and Bain et al (2002)
- Address issues of precision and fairness
- When composing it, I first thought about my co-assessor (grad student), then colleagues on project, then students in my Gen Ed course.
- Helped with settling arguments when rating the reflections, but never got to use it in-class
- Still not perfect—some great level 2’s!
  - Also does not address the 1-sentence problem
  - Assessing someone’s wisdom or insight is not like traditional assessment. Definitely no room for right/wrong grading.
Works Cited

