

## Online Cognitive Wrappers

Not all online courses include exams as assessments; however, using a variation of the exam wrapper technique can help students assess the processes they use to complete online course assignments such as discussions, essays, and projects. These “wrappers” are often referred to as “cognitive wrappers” (Bowen, 2013) or “learning wrappers” (Lovett, 2013). Below are directions for assigning cognitive wrappers for students to reflect on their processes for (a) writing a discussion post, (b) writing an essay, and (c) completing a project.

### Discussion Board Cognitive Wrapper

#### Instructions to students

During the online course, you will be writing posts for discussion forum activities every week. Your initial post in response to a reading, problem, question, or challenge will be the most work intensive of all your posts. The discussion wrapper will help you to think through your processes for developing and writing the initial post. The wrapper is intended to encourage you to think through not only the content of what you are learning, but your strategies for learning, thinking, and writing. The goal of this reflective activity is to help you continue to improve or to fine-tune your processes of writing quality posts that prepare you to gain more insight and to learn from the discussion.

1. Reflect upon the following questions that focus on your preparation processes and completion of your initial post.
  - a. Did I underestimate or overestimate the amount of time needed to complete the work to inform my discussion post?
  - b. Did I review and understand the rubric for the discussion post?
  - c. Did I write down possible responses, questions, and ideas for my post and prepare an outline before writing the post?
  - d. Did I write a draft and then review and revise the post? Did I recheck the rubric criteria, including grammar and spelling?
2. Think through the discussion wrapper questions above, and post a reflection summary to the designated assignment area in the learning management system (LMS). Your reflection summary should include the following:
  - a. Which discussion forum processes helped you to complete your discussion posts? Why were the processes helpful?
  - b. Which discussion forum processes were less helpful, or which processes you did not utilize to complete your posts?
  - c. How will you prepare differently for your next discussion posts?

## Essay Cognitive Wrapper

### Instructions to students.

Essays are an important part of your coursework, because they require you to demonstrate your knowledge, understanding, and critical thinking about a topic. Writing a successful essay requires significant preparation. An essay wrapper helps you to think through your processes for developing and writing an essay. The wrapper is intended to encourage you to think through the content of what you are writing and to strategize and prepare for writing an essay. The goal of this reflective activity is to help you continue to improve or to fine-tune your processes in order to write more clearly, to gain more insight, and to learn from the essay assignment.

1. Reflect upon the following questions that focus on your preparation processes for writing an essay.
  - Did I underestimate or overestimate the amount of time needed to (a) research, (b) write, and (c) revise my essay?
  - Did I review and understand the rubric for the essay?
  - Did I develop an outline to structure my essay to meet the rubric expectations?
  - Did I write a draft, review it, and then revise my essay? Did I check for grammar and spelling errors?
  - Did I recheck the rubric to make sure that my essay met all the expectations?

After considering the questions above, post a reflection summary to the designated assignment area in the LMS. Your reflection summary should include

- a. the essay preparation processes that worked best for you,
- b. the essay preparation processes that you found to be less helpful or which you did not follow, and
- c. a description of how you plan to adjust you processes for preparing and writing a quality essay next time.

## Project Cognitive Wrapper

### Instructions to students.

Projects offer you the opportunity to apply your learning in creative and meaningful ways. Many careers require employees to work on long-term projects, often with a team of colleagues. With that in mind, the skills you learn from completing your course project and from this assignment require you to reflect on the processes you have employed for completing the work. The knowledge you gain will be beneficial in your future endeavors, specifically in the workplace. The project cognitive wrapper is meant to help you think through and make adjustments in order to improve your processes continually for completing high quality projects.

1. Reflect upon the following questions that focus on your preparation process for completing the project.

- 
- Did I underestimate or overestimate the amount of time needed to complete each step involved in the project?
  - Did I schedule time each week to work on the project?
  - Did I review and understand the rubric for the project?
  - Did I ask for and integrate peer feedback into the final version of my project?
  - Did I recheck the rubric before turning in my final project? Did I make sure that my project met all the expectations?

After considering the questions above, post a reflection summary to the designated assignment area in the LMS. Your reflection summary should include

- a. the processes that were most helpful in successfully completing your project,
- b. the processes that you found to be less helpful or which you did not use to complete your project, and
- c. a description of how you plan to adjust your processes the next time you have a project to complete.