



## Provide Opportunities for Students to Reflect on Course Outcomes and Learning Objectives

Reflection is a powerful learning tool; it helps students retain new information while deepening their understanding of a concept or skill (Cohen, 2018). Reflection also helps students adjust their own learning, track their progress, and increase their engagement with the concepts or skills of the course. When students are given the opportunity to reflect on and respond to course outcomes, it helps them develop an understanding of what they will be doing in the course and what the final learning goals are (Darby, 2019).

There are several ways to engage students in reflecting on course outcomes and learning objectives, which increases equitable academic outcomes for all students.

### **Help Students Track Progress**

When students are engaged in what, how, and why they are learning, they are more likely to engage in the content and develop sustainable learning (Nilson, 2016). There are several tools that may be used to help students reflect on and track their progress toward course outcomes or learning objectives.

#### ***Self-Reflection***

After students complete an assignment or learning experience, provide time for them to respond to the following questions:

- Did this assignment help you to practice the skills or better comprehend the content identified in the assignment?
- How confident do you feel in being able to demonstrate the following skills? (List the skills the assignment was designed to have students practice or master.)
- What steps can you take to increase your confidence?
- What steps can I take to help you better comprehend the content or practice the skills?

#### ***Exit Tickets***

According to Brown University's Harriet W. Sheridan Center for Teaching and Learning, an exit ticket is an ideal way to end a class because it provides feedback to instructors and ensures that students reflect on their learning (Wakeford, n.d.).

The exit ticket is a low-stakes assignment that should take five minutes or less and can be applied in either in-person or online courses. There are many different approaches to exit tickets and the general process is to provide students with questions or prompts designed to have them reflect on the learning experience they just completed.

Below are some example questions or prompts for an exit ticket:

- What was the purpose of the group discussion today?
- What skills were applied in the quiz today?
- Which readings best prepared you for today's lecture?
- What three things did you learn today? What one question do you still have?



- Share a real-world application for the content you just learned.

If online, this exit ticket can be presented as a **Key Takeaway** discussion forum. In this forum, have students post one key takeaway from the module. A takeaway can include an insight, a challenge, a relationship, a pattern, or a next-step idea. This type of summary discussion requires students to review the material and identify what they think is the most important takeaway and offers other benefits as well, such as:

- giving students an opportunity to see what stood out to other students, so they can learn from other perspectives.
- providing the instructor with valuable information about students’ points of understanding or confusion.
- allowing the instructor, after all students have posted, to close with a summary of the themes, clarify any points of confusion, and provide a transition to the next module.

The exit ticket may also take the form of a **Practice Quiz**. Whether online, in person, or in a hybrid environment, provide an ungraded practice quiz for students to assess their comprehension of the major concepts of the module. They can then identify where they are confused and need to spend more time with course material. You may want to allow students to take the quiz more than once, so that they can be assured they have grasped the important concepts before they move forward.

Other forms of exit tickets include opening and ending your class session with prompts. The table below includes examples for doing so.

Open the class session with:	Close the class session with:
Presenting a question students will answer during the class or at the end of class	Having students answer your initial question using what they have learned in the class
Asking students to write down their questions on the lecture topic, and having a few students share with the class	Having students summarize what they have learned, reflecting on which of their questions were answered and which questions remain unanswered
Posing a complex problem, possibly a real-world application, to which students offer initial solutions	Having students apply new knowledge from the lecture by revising their initial solutions to the problem posed at the start of class
Telling an interesting story, sharing an anecdote, or making a pop culture reference that piques students’ interest in the topic of the class	Having students summarize what they learned by making connections to the opening story told in class
Connecting students’ previous lab or class session experiences to the content of the day, illustrating how the concepts are interrelated	Presenting a thought-provoking problem or question related to the lecture that students will consider during their next lab or the next class session



## Summary Discussion

A summary discussion takes place either at the end of the course or after a major or final project is submitted either in an online discussion forum or face-to-face. Ask students to complete a self-reflection to prepare for the discussion. Having an open conversation at this time allows students to reflect on what concepts they learned and applied, what skills they developed, what was challenging and what was engaging, how they overcame the challenges, and how all of this relates to the course outcomes and benefits their subsequent courses or professional goals.

## Sources

Cohen, L. (2018). *The power of reflection*. California Teacher Development Collaborative. <https://catdc.org/the-power-of-reflection/>

Darby, F. (with Lang, J. M.). (2019). *Small teaching online: Applying learning science in online classes*. Jossey-Bass.

Nilson, L. B. (2016). *Teaching at its best: A research-based resource for college instructors* (4th ed.). Jossey-Bass.

Wakeford, L. (n.d.). *Sample exit tickets*. Brown University, Harriet W. Sheridan Center for Teaching and Learning. <https://www.brown.edu/sheridan/teaching-learning-resources/teaching-resources/course-design/classroom-assessment/entrance-and-exit/sample>