

In Their Own Words: Student Key Learning Experiences in an Introductory Evaluation Course

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Abstract: Reflections by students on their key learning experiences in evaluation courses can provide useful data for educators seeking to identify the most impactful aspects of their teaching practice. In this practice note we describe how an instructor has included active reflective practice as part of their teaching practice, and how both the instructor and a graduate student analyzed other student reflections on key learning experiences to help improve the course. We first analyze these reflections using grounded theory, then perform two additional analyses, one using Fink's taxonomy of significant learning and the second using both the Canadian Evaluation Society's Competencies for Canadian Evaluation Practice and the American Evaluation Association's Competencies framework. We conclude by reflecting on how the frameworks provided helpful data to understand and improve the practice of teaching evaluation through the lens of the student learner.

Keywords: course design evaluation, reflection, student learning, teaching of evaluation

Résumé : Les réflexions d'étudiantes et étudiants sur leurs principales expériences d'apprentissage dans des cours d'évaluation peuvent offrir des données utiles au sujet de l'impact de diverses approches d'enseignement. Dans cette note sur la pratique, nous décrivons une pratique réflexive active et la façon dont les réflexions d'autres étudiantes et étudiants sur leurs principales expériences d'apprentissage peuvent être analysées, en vue d'améliorer un cours. Nous avons tout d'abord analysé de telles réflexions en faisant appel à une théorie empirique, puis nous avons effectué deux analyses supplémentaires, l'une utilisant la taxonomie de Fink sur l'apprentissage significatif et la deuxième utilisant autant le cadre de la Société canadienne d'évaluation (Référentiel des compétences professionnelles requises à l'exercice d'évaluation de programmes au Canada) que celui de l'American Evaluation Association (Competencies). Nous concluons en réfléchissant à la façon dont les cadres offrent des données utiles pour comprendre et améliorer la pratique de l'enseignement de l'évaluation et ce, du point de vue de l'étudiante et de l'étudiant.

Mots clés : évaluation du design d'un cours, réflexion, apprentissage étudiant, enseignement de l'évaluation

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Evaluator education, a sub-field within evaluation research, focuses on where, how, and why evaluators are educated and socialized into the profession (Gullickson et al., 2019). King and Ayoo (2020) suggest ten major domains within evaluator education that researchers and scholars might investigate, including university-based systems (LaVelle, 2019; LaVelle & Donaldson, 2010), pedagogies for the teaching of evaluation (LaVelle et al., 2020), the importance of practical learning experiences (Trevisan, 2004), and the needs of learners from different disciplines (Christie et al., 2014). Much of the recent literature, however, focuses on evaluator education systems and the educators themselves, with comparatively little attention on student learning or the ways in which data on this learning can be used in course design/redesign (King & Ayoo, 2020). In response to this gap, we describe how we use students' reflections on key learning experiences in evaluation courses as data with which to examine our teaching practice.

RETROSPECTIVE AND PROSPECTIVE REFLECTION

Dewey (1933, p. 9) described reflection as an “active, persistent, and careful consideration of any form of belief or knowledge . . . and the grounds that support it and its conclusions.” Shulman and Colbert (1989) later described reflective practice as the process of thinking backwards in time to analyze past events and behaviours and their consequences. Many evaluator educators and evaluation practitioners advocate for active reflective practice (King & Stevahn, 2014), and reflection is highlighted as a critical aspect of practice for both Canadian and American evaluators (AEA, 2018; CES, 2018). Reflection is important for high-quality evaluation practice, allowing evaluators to learn both from successes and from challenges that may have led to mistakes. Examples of retrospective reflections have been compiled into the book *Evaluation Failures* (Hutchinson, 2019), a gathering of stories and reflections to help evaluators process the successes and challenges in a completed evaluation.

Conway (2001) argued that reflective learning focused exclusively on past events is limited in its utility unless the reflector actively builds a cognitive link to future experiences and behaviour. He called this focus on the past a temporal truncation that can be addressed through anticipatory or prospective reflection (van Manen, 1995). In his phenomenological study on the preparation of teachers and their anticipated/real experiences in the classroom, Conway illustrated the utility of using prospective and retrospective reflections in tandem to understand the processes and meaning making of teachers' professional practice. He concluded that prospective reflection could assist with transitioning into a new work culture, anticipating challenges, and reinforcing learning. Similar lessons may be learned in evaluator education, by asking students both to reflect on past course content and experiences and to anticipate how these reflections will help inform future attitudes, thoughts, and behaviours.

KEY LEARNING EXPERIENCES

A “key learning experience” refers to an important learning event or process that was particularly impactful for the learner and is elicited through a reflective prompt. [Boyd and Fales \(1983\)](#) suggested that students’ reflection on impactful experiences is a critical component of experiential learning and that an educator experienced in reflecting on reflection itself should help foster the students’ reflective process. Indeed, because asking students to reflect on their key learning experience from a course can elicit discomfort as well as excitement ([Boyd & Fales, 1983](#)), the reflective process should be structured to allow students to feel both positive and negative emotions without judgement. Resolving the emotional state with new perspective is what prompts the “aha” moment for the reflector, leading to the conscious realization that their perspective has shifted. [Timoštšuk and Ugaste \(2012\)](#) later concluded that both positive and negative key learning experiences play an important role in the development of the professional identity of teachers; it is likely that the same is true for evaluators.

FRAMING STUDENT REFLECTIONS

Research on student reflections from classroom experiences varies greatly from field to field, and, depending on the discipline, the content of these reflections can range from the philosophical to the immediately practical, which makes their organization and analysis a challenge. Though little is currently known about students’ reflections from evaluation-specific courses, at least three frameworks exist to help organize the data, each providing distinct insights into what students found most memorable. First, a grounded theory process (e.g., [Miles & Huberman, 1994](#)) lets us read the students’ reflections and see what categories emerge organically. Second, [Barnes and Caprino’s 2016](#) illustration of [Fink’s \(2003\)](#) taxonomy of learning outcomes offers a helpful framework for organizing students’ reflections from a service-learning course; the data can be organized in terms of foundational knowledge, application, integration, human dimensions, caring (new values and perspectives about self or others), and learning how to learn (p. 565). Third, we can use a competency-based framework such as the [CES *Competencies for Canadian Evaluators* \(2018\)](#) or the [AEA *Competencies* \(2018\)](#). Illustrating different aspects of student learning, all three approaches have value for educators.

PROCESS

The Institutional Review Board at University of Minnesota–Twin Cities categorized this scholarship as “exempt” because the data were collected as part of the regular course assessment process.

Context and participants

I—the first author—have taught the *Introduction to Evaluation* as a practice-based course for over ten years across three universities. My course has reached more than 400 graduate and 100 undergraduate students from a range of disciplinary backgrounds including psychology, organizational behavior and development, human resource development and education, K-12 and higher education, public health, public policy and administration, and business. I designed the course as a service-learning course that meets one evening per week (Furco, 1996; Furco & Billig, 2001; LaVelle et al., 2020). I review and update my course materials every semester based on student feedback and performance, incorporating additional information from an ongoing scan of the evaluation job marketplace and from the students' reflections on their key learning experiences.

Course content and student experiences

The course topics and outline closely follow the main topics in Russ-Eft and Preskill's (2009) textbook *Evaluation in Organizations*. Topics include defining and describing evaluation, the logic of evaluation, evaluation theories of practice, evaluator roles, politics, stakeholder-driven logic models, outcome definitions, evaluation design and inquiry methodology, communication strategies, and budgeting. Students are required to engage in service learning to design and deliver a formal evaluation proposal for their community partner. The proposal elements undergo several rounds of public and private review, with students presenting the logic models, stakeholder-generated outcome descriptions contrasted with scholarly definitions, stakeholder-driven key evaluation questions, and the students' proposed design, data-collection tools, budget, and anticipated communication strategies.

Prompts for reflection

All students participating in my *Introduction to Evaluation Practice* course respond to three reflective questions on their take-home final exam. Because of the reflective nature of the questions, I distribute the exam the first night of class and refer students to it throughout the semester. The first question prompts students to develop a personal statement about evaluation and describe both the field and its processes using non-technical language. The second asks them to take a philosophical stance on evaluation's role in social justice, and the third prompts them to reflect for one page on their key learning experience from the course—specifically, on their most impactful learning and how it will influence their future behaviour and/or perspectives. This prompt is what generated the qualitative data analyzed in this practice note. The exam weighs 10% of the final grade and is an important component that fosters learning transfer. We analyzed all students' responses; no sampling was required.

DESCRIPTIONS OF STUDENT LEARNING

The richness of the qualitative data called for multiple approaches to its analysis (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). As a team, we holistically analyzed the student course data at the paragraph level of analysis, using three processes. For each approach, we used a random sample of fifteen student responses (approximately 5% of the total responses) to familiarize ourselves with the framework and build intra-team consensus on how the students' words matched onto the themes. First, we used a grounded theory/taxonomy-free inductive approach wherein we read the reflections and compiled a list of major themes. After discussing the themes iteratively to build inter-rater agreement and to reduce their number, we arrived at three major groups: personal development, professional development, and career development. We next used a deductive approach based on Fink's (2003) taxonomy of significant learning outcomes, and then on the broad categories offered by the *CES Competencies for Canadian Evaluators* (2018) and the *AEA Competencies* (2018).

Table 1 illustrates the results of the grounded theory-free inductive analysis. Several broad categories emerged; while these are presented orthogonally, many of the student reflections intersected to include personal, professional, and career-development topics. We differentiated "professional development" from "career development" because the constructs exist on two different conceptual levels; in general, professional development has a more immediate focus on technical and interpersonal skills, while career development focuses on a future career trajectory supported by a person's interests, skills, and abilities (Chaplowe & Cousins, 2016).

Table 2 presents the student reflections categorized by Fink's (2003) taxonomy of significant learning outcomes. Because it forces them into predetermined categories, this taxonomy broadly organizes the reflections into a structure more amenable to course design/redesign. Student responses suggested that most key learning experiences were linked with the application of evaluation principles and concepts to practice; remaining ones were linked with foundational knowledge of the field and with its humanistic/interpersonal dimensions. Less emphasis was placed on caring or on learning how to learn.

The third step we took was to compare the student key learning experience narratives with the available North American Evaluator Competency frameworks. We began with the broad domains of the *AEA competencies* (2018) because the authors are located in the United States, and then used the *CES competency domains* (2018) (see Table 3). Though the student narratives broadly aligned with many of the competencies, readers should interpret this crosswalk cautiously because students were asked to reflect on their most impactful learning moment, not to describe their understanding of every aspect of evaluation practice after a single course experience. We found it interesting, however, that many of the reflections aligned with the interpersonal/humanistic aspects of the competencies, and comparatively fewer discussed the more technical aspects of evaluation work.

Table 1. Student reflections organized by inductive themes

Learning outcome	Illustrative quotes	Reflections
Personal development	<p>The key thing I'll remember is how important patience is in an evaluation process ... nothing went as quickly as I imagined.</p> <p>I learned about personal strength and resilience; it is critical for evaluators and other workers to bounce back from challenges.</p> <p>This really changed my perspective on people that participate in human service programs, and I think I am more sensitive to them now.</p>	<p>Some of the most important learning is not based on the course content itself, but instead on how the student grew as a person.</p>
Professional development	<p>I learned to not take problems at face value, and to try and find ways around them.</p> <p>The way we communicate, and the words we use, really influence the way we are viewed by others; both in the evaluation team and by the stakeholders.</p> <p>This experience made me less sure of myself, but in a good way. I think I'm more aware of the things I bring to an evaluation and my limitations too.</p> <p>I'll definitely remember everything that goes into getting good data; tools [like surveys, interviews, observations] are good, but are hard to do well.</p>	<p>Important learning experiences can impact students beyond the classroom and into the person they want to become in their future work.</p>
Career development	<p>It wasn't a single moment. I started this class hating evaluation and thought the class would be a waste of time ... I could feel my hatred begin to fade, and eventually thought of it as a possible career track.</p> <p>Making us find job descriptions as part of the class made me practice looking for jobs, and it made me actually think about what I needed to compete for them.</p> <p>Understanding of evaluator's work, job duties, opportunities, and pitfalls in evaluation project.</p> <p>Application of evaluation knowledge and experience working as an evaluator.</p>	<p>Memorable learning experiences can help students see the options available to them, and then they get to decide if the option is right for them.</p>

Table 2. Student reflections organized by Fink’s taxonomy

Learning outcome	Definition	Illustrative quotes	Reflections
Foundational Knowledge	Refers to the students’ ability to understand and remember specific information and ideas.	<p>The class made me realize that even a small evaluation project took lots of considerations</p> <p>I had never really thought through the reasons for looking at initiatives, but now I have words to help me articulate them.</p> <p>I realized how little I knew about conducting formal evaluations, even though they are part of my job description</p>	<p>The foundational ideas and principles are important, especially around the language I am teaching my students.</p> <p>Beyond remembering theories and approaches to evaluation, I hope they will remember the relationship evaluation has with so many other fields.</p>
Application	Application learning allows other kinds of learning to become useful.	<p>The cookie activity was my first “a-ha” moment of the class, and the most memorable experience in my graduate school career, as we tried to define criteria about an everyday object [cookie], and how much harder it is for something like a program.</p> <p>It was when we used the 3x5 card sorting activity to organize the [research and evaluation] design for our project and a bunch of hypothetical (but realistic) scenarios.</p>	<p>These reflections remind me that much learning happens when students try to apply their knowledge, even to everyday things like cookies and clothing; many of us use evaluative tools daily, but a course like this can make learners more mindful of it.</p>
Integration	The act of making connections gives learners a new form of power, especially intellectual power.	<p>Using a box of 3x5 cards to show us how flexible the pieces of research design are helped me understand what my other classes mentioned but never really “clicked” for me.</p> <p>I never realized how much my classes in counseling would help me in evaluation.</p>	<p>The individual tools of evaluation may not be new, but their application and synthesis with other courses and topics can promote new learning.</p>

(Continued)

Table 2. (Continued)

Learning outcome	Definition	Illustrative quotes	Reflections
Human Dimension	This kind of learning informs students about the human significance of what they are learning.	<p>I realized the importance of stakeholder involvement . . . our team could not have been successful without building a strong relationship with [name].</p> <p>I learned how important it is to develop the [key evaluation] questions with the stakeholder, to try to understand their perspective with compassion and understanding, but still help them reframe the questions into something an evaluation can answer.</p> <p>I learned how important it is to have a stakeholder/client that cares about you and the project, and is willing to support you as you grow.</p>	For me, this is one of the high points of evaluation courses, because it moves evaluation away from being a technical exercise and positions it as a humanistic activity with real-world implications for ourselves and other people.
Caring	When students care about something, they then have the energy they need to learn more about it and making it a part of their lives.	<p>I realized how much I actually care about human services programs. I didn't really understand it until this class.</p> <p>It wasn't a single moment, I started this class hating evaluation and thought the class would be a waste of time . . . I could feel my hatred begin to fade, and eventually thought of it as a possible career track.</p> <p>Every person has value and possesses the ability to pick each other up when someone is down.</p>	It is interesting to see how sometimes students just need a little phrasing or a bit of context to realize how passionate they are about a topic.
Learning How to Learn	This kind of learning enables students to continue learning in the future and to do so with greater effectiveness.	<p>I realized how important it is to have classes that don't just give you an answer to every question . . . I struggled with the "it depends" answer, but to forced me to stretch beyond what I thought I knew.</p>	As an educator, I sometimes want to give my students "the answer," but I know that by letting them struggle with the content, they can learn and integrate it deeply.

Note. Definitions are from [Fink \(2003\)](#), pp. 31–32.

Table 3. Reflections organized by CES and AEA *Evaluator Competencies*

Domains	Illustrative quotes	Author reflections
CES: Reflective practice	<p>My interview with [a professional evaluator] taught me so much about what it's actually like to do evaluations and to get paid for the work . . . I was surprised at how much she emphasized the Guiding Principles and the Standards.</p>	<p>In some ways, it doesn't surprise me that many of my students' reflections were about reflective practice or professional practice, since I emphasize understanding self in this course. It makes me wonder if I emphasize reflection in my courses more now than I did as a more junior teacher.</p>
AEA: Professional practice	<p>I learned it is okay to make mistakes when you are learning, so long as you try to fix them and not make the same ones again. I was amazed by the different approaches to evaluation, and it was so interesting that different [theoretical] approaches could lead to such different evaluation proposals. Using the "storytelling" technique to develop the logic model was critical for my evaluation. I think it put the client at ease and helped position us a critical friends instead of just students from the university.</p>	<p>It seems that my evaluation course can introduce students to a range of inquiry methodologies, but there isn't enough time to go in-depth for each one. I think it is reasonable to consider the teaching successful if they take away a few "big ideas" about inquiry as a whole.</p>
CES: Technical practice	<p>I found that evaluators can learn a lot from surveys when the surveys are good. . . I had always thought they were not good because they didn't give a lot of information . . . they do, but they are hard to develop!</p>	
AEA: Methodology	<p>Using the 3x5 cards to organize the research design made the whole concept of design understandable. Using candy to illustrate how to conduct [quantitative and qualitative] data analysis really helped me understand how many ways the same data can be interpreted.</p>	

(Continued)

Table 3. (Continued)

Domains	Illustrative quotes	Author reflections
CES: Situational practice	I realized how important context is to doing evaluation . . . some of the things I heard from my classmates would never work in my indigenous context.	The contexts in which evaluators work influences much of what they think will be appropriate, and it makes me think about more and different ways to bring contextual components into my classes.
AEA: Context	I realized how an evaluation could unintentionally marginalize a community by excluding their voices from the process. . . maybe not in every context, but I'll definitely remember that for future projects.	
CES: Management practice	I realized just how much work and effort goes into just planning the evaluation, and we didn't even carry it out this semester!	I am happy when my students appreciate all the little steps that go into an evaluation proposal, but the relatively low frequency of comments make me wonder if budgeting and planning need a greater emphasis in my course.
AEA: Planning and development	I didn't realize how intricate budgeting is, and had no idea how much I could even ask for doing something like an evaluation!	Reflections like these made me realize I needed to do a better job of helping my students form their groups and set expectations. Most have never done an evaluation or "real" project before, so I need to help them be successful. I cannot assume it will happen without support.
CES: Interpersonal practice	Definitely the biggest lesson was about my team and setting expectations early. . . we had a lot of problems until we discussed what we brought to the team and what our pet peeves are.	
AEA: Interpersonal	I definitely took away that this field heavily relies on trust and personal investment.	

TEACHER REFLECTION

I find teaching evaluation exhilarating and take great joy in helping students learn while also providing conceptual—and sometimes operational—support for community partners that work and serve communities near the university. Like most program stakeholders, I also experience a bit of the usual evaluation anxiety when it comes time to examine my own teaching practice (Donaldson et al., 2002), though I take a formative lens on the practice. Indeed, reflection on my teaching of evaluation is as critical to my development as an educator as reflective evaluation practice is to the practicing evaluator.

After the semester is complete and I have submitted final grades to the Registrar, I closely review my syllabus, teaching materials, and teaching activities. I then review the student key learning experience data and reflect on the purpose of the course itself. With this introductory program evaluation course, my aim is to give students an introduction to the field and its foundational documents (e.g., the AEA Guiding Principles, Standards, Statement on Cultural Competence, Competencies etc.), and help them contrast several theoretical approaches to evaluation practice. I also want them to develop evaluation and inquiry skills while they provide conceptual support to a community partner. And I have the implicit goal—not a learning objective—of the course experience helping to humanize the students, the course content, and the community partners (LaVelle, 2020). In sum, my course is meant to develop critical consumers of evaluation and increase students' familiarity with the field, not necessarily to create stand-alone professional practitioners (Morris, 1994); I believe that would require several courses in evaluation that are explicitly supported by inquiry methods and data analysis.

With these goals in mind, I review the student reflections and the syllabus side-by-side, looking for broad alignment between the reflections and the major topics outlined in the syllabus and teaching materials. I assume that when specific teaching activities are described several times as impactful, they were mainly effective for this group of students. For example, students often point to our use of chocolate chip cookies to illustrate evaluation logic as their key learning experience (Preskill & Russ-Eft, 2016), so I maintain both the activity and its current framing without much change. As well, students often reflect on the activities that address cultural assumptions, research design, and the development of program logic models through role-playing, so I will maintain these activities in the future as well. Not all of my activities, however, make it into the reflective papers, which I take as an indication that I should re-examine both the activity and the topic I was trying to address. Lack of discussion doesn't necessarily mean that the activity was bad or implemented poorly, though that could certainly be the case; it could simply mean that other learning experiences were more impactful for this group of students.

The process of writing this paper has helped me think further about the goals and outcomes of an evaluation-specific course, how to solicit reflections (Boyd & Fales, 1983), and how to organize these reflections so I can understand where and how the course worked for the students and where I should make

adjustments. The inductive approach to analyzing student reflections helped me see where my students were both professionally and personally, but it lacked the structure to provide insights on how to improve my teaching practice. Similarly, the CES (2018) and the AEA (2018) *Competencies* frameworks were too detailed to be helpful; they left me with a sense of having failed my students because of the impossibility of addressing each competency in depth in a single course (Tucker, personal communication, 2018). They might be more appropriate for analyzing a series of workshops or an entire curriculum than a single course. Framed another way, this experience taught me that educators must be selective about which competencies are targeted in a single course.

By contrast, Fink's (2003) taxonomy of significant learning outcomes was immensely helpful in organizing the students' reflections into broad clusters that I use to understand my teaching practice. Most memorable for me were the student reflections about what it meant to be a good teammate, the students who said the course helped them think differently about people who participate in programs, or the ones who realized they had a passion for helping specific groups of people. These "humanistic" reflections have influenced how I approach my courses and how I encourage students to consider the programs they are proposing to evaluate (LaVelle, 2020), as well as which aspects of evaluation practice I emphasize in my class.

Ultimately, the students' reflections on their key learning experiences have proven to be a rich source of ideas and inspiration, allowing me to take a critical look at my teaching practice and seek continuous improvement. They have also given me an opportunity to ask my students how my class and my teaching have made an impact in their lives and perspectives. As a teacher, evidence of influence within and beyond the classroom is the greatest reward I could hope for.

STUDENT REFLECTION

The process of analyzing student reflections was an interesting experience, and I—the second author—saw that my peers took different learnings from the class even though we had similar in-class experiences. Using the different frameworks helped me see how frequently used words and ideas could mean very different things based on how they were communicated, contextualized, and analyzed.

First, I found that reflections on key learning experiences can be used as a tool to identify students' intended and unintended learning outcomes. As a student, I assume that many professors design their courses with the intention that they be useful for students later on, but the connection between what is taught and what is memorable is not always clear to either professor or student. In these reflections, many students started by describing their "aha" moments, then explaining how what they learned can be applied to their future evaluation practice or work. Others described drawing connections between their experiences and their perception of future professional behaviours—connections that can be applied across contexts—or learning that they have a passion (or not) for community-engaged work.

This experience has made me more aware of the importance of the language used by professors and others to introduce new ideas and reinforce important concepts. The students' key learnings came from many sources, including class activities, lectures, group meetings, and meetings with clients, meaning that educators must be consistent in their use of words and examples as they introduce and reinforce central ideas. I also started to look at the jargon that people learn in the classroom, and realized that a person can be very professional and respected even when using non-technical language. As I look back at the course description and other documents, I realize how much attention was paid to making the content serious but accessible.

I found the reflections an interesting source of ideas for making changes to the course design and teaching strategies, and think that the prompt encouraged students to be honest about their most important experience because there were no "wrong" answers. Some students introduced their "aha" moment by describing a specific challenge or difficulty they encountered and indicating "I wish I had . . ." or "I should have . . ." Professors can use these reflections to understand where students struggled and address these difficulties the next time the course is taught. These reflections can also prompt a teacher to consider what they would do in a similar situation and what they would advise the student to do differently next time.

The reflection seems an important chance for students to relearn or solidify their understanding of the course material, as they revisit that material and reflect on what worked and didn't. Some students share that evaluation theories and models look easy when we discuss them in class, but are difficult to apply in practice. This kind of reflection could be an important aspect of many courses, both inside and outside of evaluation, because it moves the focus of the learning away from a test or project to something more substantial: how to identify individual strengths and limitations, and to overcome challenges.

Finally, this experience reinforced to me the importance of process-based as well as content-based courses for both evaluation majors and non-majors. The majority of students who wrote these reflections were not evaluation majors, but were from fields such as social work, natural sciences, human resources, and public health. Many shared in the reflection assignment that the course not only helped them gain knowledge about evaluation, but helped prepare them for consulting positions, entrepreneurship, or work in an organization. They may not remember some of the specific content, but they can look that up later; what I think they will remember is the experience of designing an evaluation proposal for the first time and the explicit linking of an intensive course with valued and marketable skills.

CONCLUSION

In this paper we have introduced active reflections as part of course design, analyzed how students' reflections on their key learning experiences help improve a

course, and how reflection assignments build up students' interpersonal skills, professional competencies, and career readiness. Both the instructor and student found students' reflections to be an effective method for maximizing learning outcomes, an efficient approach to summarizing successful experiences, and a chance to learn what can be done better and how to make improvements. We hope other educators will follow this process. The costs are low, and the rewards great.

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