

Strategy: Ending the Semester: Individual and Group Activities

Providing reflection opportunities for students at the end of the semester can provide many benefits for faculty and students including helping students recognize how much they've learned, synthesizing that knowledge, identifying future applications for knowledge, increasing retention of information, and collecting artifacts to share with future students in the course.

Origin

Brill, R. (2009). How to make course evaluations more valuable. Retrieved from <http://www.facultyfocus.com/articles/effective-teaching-strategies/how-to-make-course-evaluations-more-valuable/>.

Connor, P. (2009). *Managing the end of the semester*. Retrieved from <http://teaching.colostate.edu/tips/tip.cfm?tipid=154>.

Mills, W. (2010). *A strong ending to the semester*. Retrieved from <http://www.wku.edu/teaching/booklets/astrongending.pdf>.

Panitz, T. (n.d.). End-of-semester self-evaluation. Retrieved from <http://www.oncourseworkshop.com/Staying%20On%20Course001.htm>.

Application

These ideas provide opportunities for end of the semester activities.

- **Concept map:** Have students create a model of the course material and write a 1-2 paragraph description of how the model relates to course content.
- **Reference letters for peers:** Have students write their peers letters of recommendation based on their experience with them in the course (works especially well for students who have worked together on group projects).
- **Handshake:** Shake students' hands and call them by name (if possible) as students leave class on the last day.
- **Letters to future students:** Have students write a letter to a future student in the course. Have them summarize the material, discuss study techniques and learning strategies, explain problem areas, and give a general introduction to the course.
- **Personal scavenger hunt:** Have students bring in objects that represent what they have learned and how they have changed during the semester.
- **Cover letter:** Have students write a cover letter reflecting on their growth in the course. Ask them to specifically address course concepts and issues as well as class activities and assignments.
- **Around the room review:** Write major course topics on large sheets of paper and place the sheets around the room at various stations. Pairs or group students travel around the stations, spending 1-2 minutes at each station, writing information about the topic that they can remember. They cannot duplicate information that is already there, but they can make corrections if needed. Then debrief each station as a large group.
- **Share what you learned:** Tell students what you've learned during the course.
- **Concept map:** Have your students create a concept map for the course.

- **Wordle:** Have students create a Wordle for the course.
- **Revision:** Have students revisit one of their earlier assignments and note their learning and development since then.
- **Group reflection:** Have students discuss the course in groups to analyze how their thinking has changed throughout the semester.
- **Ask questions:** What's the most important thing you've learned? How will you apply what you've learned? Analyze this...? Synthesize that...? Apply what you've learned to solving...?
- **Group quiz:** Have groups write quiz questions for one another and swap quizzes between groups.
- **Syllabus review:** Have students review your syllabus goals and learning objectives and ask them to assess their learning.
- **Self-evaluation:** In addition to instructor evaluations, have students evaluate themselves by asking: Has your approach to (topic) changed during this course or compared to previous courses? If so how? Have your attitudes and feelings about (topic) changed? How do you feel you performed in this course and why do you feel that way? What would you do differently if you had to do this all over again? How do you feel (teaching strategy) worked in this course? Do you have any suggestions for improving class procedures? What else would you like to add that I have not asked?
- **Three-option feedback system for students:** Ask students to provide feedback about the course so you can continue to improve. Provide students with a list of course components and ask them to respond to each course component (books, assignments, activities, etc.) with one of three options: KEEP AS IS, KEEP BUT MODIFY, or REMOVE FROM COURSE and then justify why it should stay, be changed, or be removed. Cut and paste learning outcomes from your syllabus to guide student answers

<h3>Reflection</h3>

- How does this compare to what you are already doing?
- Which of these activities would be most useful in your course?
- How could you modify these activities to use at the beginning of the course?