



Reflection Assignments

How Reflection Combats Plagiarism

Asking students to reflect on the stages of their process as they work can similarly combat plagiarism from two angles:

1. It encourages students to articulate what makes writing difficult for them and lets you know when they're struggling so you can help.
2. It requires a different kind of exposure than plagiarism does. Students who may not feel guilty about copying a generic essay will likely feel worse about completely fabricating a process or their own feelings and therefore hesitate to do so.

Why Reflection Works

Students Will Learn What Works For Them

Something as simple as asking, "What was especially difficult about writing this outline?" or "Which part of this draft are you most proud of?" can help students to notice what works well for them or what causes them to struggle. If you follow one of those questions by asking students how they can either replicate their positive feelings in future work or how they can avoid the struggle, they can try to use that reflection to transfer skills to future assignments.

Students Will See That You Care About Their Writing

Asking students to reflect also demonstrates that you really care about their writing. This might seem like a silly point, but, as Rebecca Moore Howard notes, assignments that feel like busywork or that strike students as generic increase the likelihood of plagiarism. If students feel that you care about what they have to say, they have a greater stake in their writing and are more likely to work at it.