

*Below is an excerpt from a document I wrote about my own teaching. It is my reflection about, what I think is, a reflective assignment.*

## *Weekly Quizzes*

Another assignment I am proud of is neither high tech, nor is it particularly innovative. It is a paper and pencil quiz based on the reading assignment and administered at the beginning of every single class session. This seems incredibly old-fashioned and in some ways reminds me of grammar school days. However, there is a much more involved metacognitive process that the students go through with each quiz. Before administering the quiz, I ask students to jot down in their notebook a sentence or two about how they prepared that week. They then take the 4-question, short-answer quiz. If they tell me they didn't read the chapter I ask them to look at the questions and try to answer them anyway based on their prior experiences and prior coursework. There is no escaping the quiz! After they take it, I collect them and we briefly reflect as a large group on how it went. I then ask students to jot down in their notebooks how they plan to study for next week's quiz. In the last step, I hand their quizzes back to them (ungraded by me) and give them all colored writing markers. I ask them to work in pairs or groups of three, examine the textbook and their notes and add, in marker, anything they think would make their original answers stronger. The students tend to discuss their answers and work together to find references in the text that would make their answers stronger. Finally, I collect the quizzes. The following week, they get my feedback on the quiz along with the final score. Oftentimes, I agree with their suggestions for how to make their answers stronger and I might offer additional suggestions. I base the score on their original answers.

What I have found is that the students do tend to read the book. They come to class each week knowing they have to take a quiz. Oftentimes, students come to class a little early so they can review together. They know that they will get a chance to go back to the material and add to their quiz answers as needed. They also know that doing this will not change the grade however; they all seem to enjoy doing this part of the process. As we reflect on it throughout the semester, they begin to learn more about themselves and how they learn best. They seem to have a better sense of their own prepared-ness. This is an important metacognitive skill to develop as a student. I also believe that it is important to know that learning is a process that oftentimes takes many steps. I have found that when I do this routinely with my students, they seem calmer about the testing process. In fact, this past week after taking the first quiz one of my students said, "it felt more like learning instead of just being tested". This is my goal. Everything about the class should be about student learning, even if it is an assessment. I like the rhythm of a quiz at the beginning of the class. Students start each class session with 20 minutes of highly concentrated time in which they are actively engaged with the content of the course, their textbooks, their own writing, and each other.

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