Reflection and the Honors mindset

Leslie Morrison

As research shows, reflection can be an effective way to help students develop metacognitive strategies, transfer knowledge, and change their mindset. In my experience, reflection works best when it is practiced frequently. In an ALP course, reflection can take many forms:

* Small-group discussions about writing process, experiences, and strategies
* “Think-aloud” modeling
* Genre-specific assignments (brochures, guides, posters)
* Conference, revision, and grade reflections
* A course final (coversheet, cover letter, memo)
* Reflections on past writing experiences (both positive and negative)
* Midterm reflections and self-evaluations

These assignments can all be designed to help students see themselves as successful learners who are resilient, resourceful, experienced, and strategic. Thinking about the processes of writing and learning helps students “decode” future assignments and have confidence in their abilities to manage challenges effectively (self-efficacy).

Questions for Discussion:

* What specific skills do you want to see your students develop? How could you design a reflection assignment to help students understand and transfer those skills?
* When would reflection be most effective in your class?
* What has worked and not worked for you with reflection assignments?
* How do we avoid students telling us what we want to hear in their reflection?
* How do we communicate the goals of reflection to students so that they don’t see it as “busy work”?