

# STLI QUICK TIPS

Connection through Reflection: A deceptively simple exercise for deeper learning

with STLI Fellow Joan Gavalier



## Reflect

Students consider their interests and experiences in relation to the course. This is usually done through a series of guided questions



## Share

Students share their reflections in small groups. Hearing what others have to say offers a variety of perspectives.



## Integrate

In a larger class discussion, the instructor helps students use their individual reflections and group conversations to integrate themes of the course into their own perspectives and practices.

Take our short course:



[go.wm.edu/2rDwHH](https://go.wm.edu/2rDwHH)



**For more information, contact:**

2022 STLI Fellow for  
Excellence in Teaching

Joan Gavalier: [jsgava@wm.edu](mailto:jsgava@wm.edu)

STLI: [stli@wm.edu](mailto:stli@wm.edu)

Watch the video:



[go.wm.edu/znlGKy](https://go.wm.edu/znlGKy)

## STLI QUICK TIPS: Connection through Reflection: A deceptively simple approach

with STLI Fellow Joan Gavalier

**What is it?** This classroom reflection activity can help your students develop and link their individual experiences and interests to your course for deeper understanding and connection with the discipline. It can also help you as a professor stay fresh when engaging new cohorts of learners.

**How much time will it take?** We recommend providing a brief reflection homework assignment followed by 20-30 minutes of conversation during class for each reflection activity. You can reflect any number of times in a course, but we suggest 2-3 reflections throughout a semester.

### How do I try it out?

**Reflect:** Provide students with a reflection prompt connecting their own experiences and interests to the course subject matter. Students write about or illustrate their reflection in some way. **See some sample reflection prompts below.**

**Share:** We suggest smaller groups of 2-4 students share their reflections and connect with each other for a few minutes, followed by an opportunity for each group to share themes with the class. The act of sharing initiates the integration process.

**Integrate:** For the reflection activity to influence learning and growth, it is critical that the professor creates a welcoming environment and responds to the reflections with the class. Here are some options:

- Summarize information from the reflections and respond with observations around both common themes and interesting outliers.
  - Share your own reflection from your perspective as either a teacher or a student.
  - Reference information from the student reflections in the presentation of the next classroom lectures or assignments.
- 

### Early Semester Sample Questions

- If you are taking this class to fulfill a requirement, why did you choose this course rather than another?
- Do you have any pre-existing knowledge about or interest in the topic? When you think about the topics in this course, what are the first things that come to mind and why?
- What do you hope you will learn in this course?
- Take a look at the syllabus and consider what looks most interesting to you. What speaks to you and why?

### Mid Semester Sample Questions

- What concept in this course connects with your intellectual passions or values and how?
- What aspect of this course is challenging for you and how?
- What aspect of this course adds a new perspective to one of your current interests and how?

### Late Semester Sample Questions

- Do you feel that you've integrated ideas from this course into your overall perspective?
- Did you learn anything that you did not expect to learn this semester?
- What will you take with you from this class?