

TEACHING TRANSFERABLE SKILLS

Instructor Toolkit

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ESSENTIAL SKILLS COURSE & ASSIGNMENT DESIGN TOOLKIT

The Essential Skills Course & Assignment Design Toolkit is a collection of practical planning tools designed to help instructors intentionally integrate the 10 Essential Skills into their courses and assignments.

While the Essential Skills Instructor Resource Guides provide skill-specific information, teaching strategies, example activities, and approaches to assessment, this toolkit focuses on the course and assignment design process. The tools can be used with any of the 10 Essential Skills and are intended to help instructors move from identifying a skill they want students to develop to making that development visible, scaffolded, and assessable.

How to Use This Toolkit

The resources in this toolkit can be used individually or together. You do not need to complete every tool or follow them in a particular order. Choose the resource that best supports where you are in the design process.

Making Essential Skills Visible to Students DESIGN TOOL

Use this resource when you have identified an Essential Skill within an assignment but want to make it more explicit.

This tool will help you:

- translate a broad Essential Skill into observable Student Moves;
- identify what successful performance should do, show, and avoid;
- communicate the purpose of the skill and expectations for success directly to students.

Helpful when: revising an existing assignment, clarifying expectations, developing student-facing assignment language, or connecting coursework explicitly to Essential Skills.

Scaffolding Essential Skills Across a Course

PLANNING TOOL

Use this resource when you want to consider how students will develop an Essential Skill over time rather than encounter it only in a single assignment.

This tool will help you identify opportunities for students to:

- practice a skill with support;
- develop it through increasingly complex or independent application;
- demonstrate their learning;
- receive and use feedback throughout the process.

Helpful when: planning or revising a course, examining the sequence of assignments, or preparing students for a major assessment.

Essential Skills Transparent Assignment Design Template

Assignment Template

Use this resource when you are creating or revising an assignment and want to make its purpose, Essential Skills, tasks, and criteria for success clear to students.

This template will help you align:

- the purpose of the assignment;
- the Essential Skills and disciplinary knowledge students will develop;
- the tasks students will complete;
- the criteria for success;
- opportunities for feedback, reflection, and transfer.

Helpful when: developing a new assignment, substantially revising an existing assignment, or translating course-design decisions into student-facing instructions.

BENCHMARK ESSENTIAL SKILLS

Designing for UK Core Courses

UK Core courses provide opportunities for students to begin developing and recognizing the 10 Essential Skills. For these courses, instructors should design learning experiences appropriate to the Benchmark level of the Essential Skills rubrics.

Benchmark-level learning does not mean that students encounter a skill only once or complete only simple tasks. Students can still practice, receive feedback, revise, and demonstrate increasing independence within a course while working toward introductory Benchmark expectations.

The examples below translate the Benchmark criteria into observable student actions and illustrate how those actions might be incorporated into existing course activities and assignments. They are intended as starting points rather than required activities. Refer to the full Essential Skills rubrics and Instructor Resource Guides for complete criteria, teaching strategies, and assessment guidance.

Potential Essential Skill Actions

Essential Skill	At the Benchmark Level, Students Might...	In an Introductory Course, This Could Look Like...
Communication	Ask questions to clarify understanding; express ideas through writing; share information and ideas in one-on-one or small-group conversations.	Write a short explanation of a course concept; ask a clarifying question during discussion; explain an idea or finding to a partner or small group.
Critical & Creative Thinking	Describe a problem using gathered information; recognize how their own perspectives may shape problem-solving; identify possible solutions; contribute relevant ideas during brainstorming.	Examine a course-related problem using provided information, identify an assumption or perspective they bring to it, and generate several possible responses or solutions.

Essential Skill	At the Benchmark Level, Students Might...	In an Introductory Course, This Could Look Like...
Quantitative Reasoning	Identify important information in equations, graphs, tables, or other data displays; perform basic calculations such as percentages or basic statistics; recognize how quantitative information relates to a problem or its assumptions.	Interpret a graph or table from a course reading, calculate a percentage or simple statistic, and explain what the quantitative information helps reveal about the question being studied.
Interpersonal Relations	Articulate their own perspectives and lived experiences; recognize that perspectives can affect interactions; demonstrate awareness that people hold multiple perspectives, ideas, and beliefs.	Reflect briefly on how their perspective shapes their response to a course topic, compare it with another perspective, and identify how those differences might influence an interaction.
Adaptability & Leadership	Describe how people can cooperate toward a shared goal; explain why new situations may require different approaches; recognize how others can influence motivation toward a goal.	Examine a change in a project, scenario, or group task and explain how the group might need to adjust; identify strategies people could use to support progress toward a shared goal.
Professionalism	Demonstrate honesty, fairness, and respect; recognize the importance of deadlines and punctuality; meet obligations and follow through on commitments; show interest in learning about professional fields.	Complete agreed-upon responsibilities on time, interact respectfully during course activities, and explore how expectations such as reliability or ethical conduct operate within a field connected to the course.
Civic Engagement	Discuss basic ideas related to public policy and the social good while acknowledging others' perspectives; articulate foundational knowledge about civic participation and government; describe opportunities to engage in civic life.	Discuss a course-related public issue using evidence and multiple viewpoints; examine how individuals or groups have participated in civic life; identify a possible avenue for civic engagement related to an issue.

Essential Skill	At the Benchmark Level, Students Might...	In an Introductory Course, This Could Look Like...
Collaboration & Teamwork	Participate in team discussions and support team decisions; respond to communication; complete assigned responsibilities; recognize how individual contributions affect team goals; acknowledge team strengths and limitations.	Complete a small-group task with defined responsibilities, contribute to group decisions, follow through on an assigned role, and briefly reflect on what helped or limited the team's work.
Knowledge Application	Identify types of work and career opportunities; describe foundational knowledge, skills, and abilities needed in a career area; explore careers while considering personal strengths, interests, values, and goals.	Investigate a profession related to course content, identify the foundational knowledge or abilities it requires, and consider how course learning or personal interests connect to that work.
Information Literacy	Identify when information is needed for a decision; develop basic search strategies using familiar resources; identify strengths and weaknesses of sources; describe key ideas from multiple sources; identify where information came from.	Identify what information is needed to answer a course question, locate information using familiar databases or resources, compare the usefulness of potential sources, summarize relevant ideas, and identify the sources used.

This Toolkit Across Disciplines

Integrating Essential Skills does not require rebuilding a course from the ground up. In many cases, students are already practicing these skills through existing assignments, discussions, projects, and other learning experiences. Because Essential Skills are transferable, what they look like in practice will vary across courses and disciplines. The goal is to identify how skill development already shows up through the knowledge, methods, tools, audiences, and practices of your course, and make that development more intentional and visible to students.

The tools in this toolkit offer one process for doing that, not a single prescribed approach. Begin with what you already have, such as an assignment that matters, a skill students are already using, or a place where students could benefit from a clearer connection between what they are doing and what they are learning. The goal is not to add more for the sake of adding more, but to make purposeful choices about the learning already taking place.

Making Essential Skills Visible

Instructor Worksheet

Objective

Students are more likely to recognize, practice, and transfer Essential Skills when instructors make those skills explicit. Rather than assuming students will recognize that an assignment develops skills such as communication, teamwork, information literacy, or professionalism, identify what students will actually do, what successful performance will look like, and how they will receive feedback on their development.

This worksheet can help you translate an Essential Skill into concrete, student-facing expectations that can be incorporated into an assignment description, syllabus, Canvas page, rubric, or class discussion.

STEP 1: Choose an Essential Skill

Identify one Essential Skills that students practice or could practice through an existing assignment.

Essential Skill: _____

Assignment or activity: _____

The 10 Essential Skills

- Communication
- Critical and Creative Thinking
- Quantitative Reasoning
- Interpersonal Relations
- Adaptability and Leadership
- Professionalism
- Civic Engagement
- Collaboration and Teamwork
- Knowledge Application
- Information Literacy

STEP 2: Identify the Student Moves

Broad skills become easier to teach and assess when they are translated into specific, observable actions. A “student move” is a concrete verb + object + context statement describing what students will actually do in an assignment. Consider the following:

Demonstrate strong communication skills.

OR

Explain the benefits of vaccination in plain language for clinic patients.

Use information literacy.

OR

Compare three sources for authority, relevance, and evidence before selecting information for the recommendation.

Use the organizer below to unpack what the Essential Skills looks like within your assignment. There is an “Action Verb Bank” and worked example on the next page for your reference as you work.

Assignment Focus	Knowledge, Method, or Tools	What these add?	Stakeholders/ Audience/ Context	Student Moves
What are students creating, solving, analyzing, or accomplishing?	What disciplinary knowledge, methods, resources, or tools will they use?	What does each contribute to the work?	Who will use, evaluate, experience, or be affected by the work?	What will students actually do? Use concrete verbs.

Action Verb Bank

Use observable verbs to describe what students will do. Add discipline-specific verbs that better describe the work students do in your field to the bank below.

analyze • apply • assess • compare • coordinate • create • evaluate • explain • interpret • justify • plan • propose • reflect • revise • synthesize • test

EXAMPLE

Essential Skill: Communication

Assignment or activity: Patient information flyer

Assignment Focus	Knowledge, Method, or Tools	What these add?	Stakeholders/Audience/Context	Student Moves
What are students creating, solving, analyzing, or accomplishing?	What disciplinary knowledge, methods, resources, or tools will they use?	What does each contribute to the work?	Who will use, evaluate, experience, or be affected by the work?	What will students actually do? Use concrete verbs.
Create a clinic flyer to increase RSV vaccine uptake	Message framing; brief walk-in interviews; readability check; layout principles	Audience barriers; plain-language targets; visual hierarchy	Clinic staff; adult walk-in patients	Explain RSV vaccine benefits in plain language; test wording with clinic walk-ins; revise the message and layout for readability

STEP 3: Define What Success Looks Like

Once you know what students will actually do, make expectations for successful performance visible and specific.

For the assignment you've chosen, identify the following:

DO	SHOW	AVOID
What a strong submission does	What you will read, hear, see, or otherwise use as evidence of the skill	A common pitfall students should know upfront

EXAMPLE

Essential Skill: Communication

Assignment or activity: Patient information flyer

DO	SHOW	AVOID
Explain your message in plain language appropriate for clinic walk-ins	Include a clear explanation of vaccine benefits, at least one concrete example and an actionable next step	Jargon, unexplained acronyms, or language that assumes prior medical knowledge

STEP 4: Make the Skill Explicit to Students

Use your responses from the previous steps to explain what skill students are practicing, how they will practice it, what evidence will demonstrate their learning, and how they will receive feedback.

Complete the statement:

“In this assignment, you’ll practice _____ by _____.”

You’ll show this by _____.

We’ll give feedback on _____.”

This language can be incorporated directly into an assignment description, syllabus, Canvas page, rubric, or class discussion.

EXAMPLE

In this assignment, you’ll practice **communication** by **explaining health information clearly for an audience of adult clinic patients**.

You’ll show this by **creating a flyer that uses plain language, provides a clear next step, and responds to what you learn from testing your message with potential readers**.

We’ll give you feedback on **the clarity of your message, its fit for your intended audience, and how effectively you revise your communication based on feedback**.

STEP 5: Check for Alignment and Transfer

Review the assignment from the perspective of a student.

- Is the Essential Skill explicitly named?
- Are students asked to do something observable that develops the skill?
- Are the Student Moves reflected in the assignment instructions?
- Is it clear what evidence will demonstrate successful performance?
- Will students receive feedback specifically related to the skill?
- Do students have an opportunity to practice or revise before being evaluated?
- Can students see how the skill could matter beyond this particular assignment or course?

NEXT STEP: Scaffold the Skill

Now that you have identified what the Essential Skill looks like in this assignment, consider how students will develop it over time.

- Where will students first practice the skill?
- How will they deepen, refine, or apply it in more complex contexts?
- Where will they ultimately demonstrate their learning?
- What opportunities will they have to receive feedback and use it to improve?

For help mapping this progression across a course, see the companion Scaffolding Essential Skills Across a Course planning tool. It can help you identify opportunities for students to practice, develop, and demonstrate the skill over time.

Scaffolding Essential Skills

Course Progression Worksheet

Essential Skills are developed and deepened through cycles of practice, feedback, reflection, and opportunities to apply learning in increasingly complex contexts. Effective scaffolding helps students build toward more independent and sophisticated demonstrations of a skill over time.

Use this planning tool to identify where students will first practice an Essential Skill, how they will develop and refine it, and where they ultimately demonstrate their learning.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN: Keep the Scaffold Manageable

As you plan, consider a few guiding principles:

- **Start small.** Introduce the skill through low-stakes activities before asking students to demonstrate it in a major assignment
- **Build in feedback.** Give student opportunities to identify what they are doing well and where they need more practice or to improve.
- **Make reflection part of the process.** Ask students to notice how their approach, performance, or understanding changes over time.
- **Connect the skill to meaningful contexts.** Help students recognize where and why they may use the skill beyond the course.
- **Build on what you already do.** Look for places to strengthen skill development within existing activities and assignments rather than automatically adding new ones.

STEP 1: Identify the Skill and Learning Context

Choose one Essential Skill that is important for student success in your course

Essential Skill: _____

Course: _____

Where does this skill currently show up in the course?

Think Back to Your Student Moves

If you completed the Making Essential Skills Visible to Students design tool, revisit the Student Moves you identified.

What should students be able to do with this skill by the end of the course?

EXAMPLE

Essential Skill: Information Literacy

Course Context: A U.S. History course in which students use primary and secondary sources to investigate historical questions.

Where does this skill currently show up?

Students encounter primary and secondary sources in course readings, discuss the credibility and context of historical evidence, and use outside sources in a final research-based assignment.

What should students be able to do by the end of the course?

Students should be able to locate and evaluate relevant sources, consider how authority and context shape the information those sources provide, and use appropriate evidence to support a historical interpretation.

STEP 2: Plan the Progression

Think about how students can encounter the skill multiple times as expectations become more complex.

PRACTICE

Introduce the skill and make the process visible.

What early, low-stakes activities will give students an opportunity to try the skill? Consider:

- What foundational knowledge or strategies do students need?
- Can you model or demonstrate the skill?
- Can students analyze examples or compare approaches?
- Where can they try the skill with limited stakes?
- What early feedback will help them improve?

Activities/Assignments

Feedback/Reflection

EXAMPLE

Activities/Assignments: Students examine a small set of provided sources related to the same historical event, such as a newspaper article, political speech, photograph, and scholarly interpretation. Using a guided set of questions, they identify each source's creator, purpose, audience, historical context, and potential limitations. Students then compare two sources and identify what each contributes to understanding the event.

Feedback / Reflection: Students compare their evaluations with an instructor model or discuss them in small groups. Feedback focuses on distinguishing between simply describing a source and evaluating how its origin, purpose, and context affect how it should be used as evidence.

DEVELOP

Deepen the skill through application, feedback and revision.

How will students use the skill in a more complex or authentic context? Consider:

- How will the task become more challenging?
- Can students apply the skill with greater independence?
- Can they use feedback from earlier practice?
- Will they need to adapt the skill to a new audience, problem, context, or constraint?
- Where can students reflect on how their performance is changing?

Activities/Assignments

Feedback/Reflection

EXAMPLE

Activities/Assignments: Students investigate a course-related historical question and locate several potential sources themselves. They evaluate each source for relevance, authority, perspective, and usefulness before deciding which sources to include. Students create a brief annotated source set explaining what each source contributes to their investigation and identifying any gaps, limitations, or perspectives still missing.

Feedback / Reflection: Students receive peer or instructor feedback on their source choices and annotations. They then replace, add, or reconsider at least one source and briefly explain how their evaluation process shaped that decision.

DEMONSTRATE

Apply the skill with greater independence and make learning visible.

Where will students demonstrate what they can now do? Consider:

- What assignment, performance, project, or experience provides meaningful evidence of the skill?
- What does successful performance look like?
- How will students know what criteria will be used?
- Can students explain the choices they made?
- Can they identify how the skill might transfer to another course, profession, community, or context?

Activities/Assignments

Feedback/Reflection

EXAMPLE

Activities/Assignments: Students develop an evidence-based interpretation of a historical question using a combination of appropriately selected primary and secondary sources. Rather than simply incorporating a required number of sources, students must demonstrate intentional source selection, account for differences in perspective and context, and use evidence to support and complicate their interpretation.

Feedback / Reflection: Students submit the final project along with a short source reflection explaining how they determined which sources were most useful, how they accounted for limitations or conflicting evidence, and how their approach to finding and evaluating information changed during the project.

STEP 3: Map the Scaffold

Use the space below to look at the progression as a whole.

PRACTICE	DEVELOP	DEMONSTRATE
What introductory activities or assignments will lay the foundation for the skill?	How will students deepen and refine the skill through more complex application?	Where will students demonstrate what they can do with the skill?
Feedback:	Feedback:	Evidence:
How will students receive and use feedback as they move through the progression?		

EXAMPLE

PRACTICE	DEVELOP	DEMONSTRATE
What introductory activities or assignments will lay the foundation for the skill?	How will students deepen and refine the skill through more complex application?	Where will students demonstrate what they can do with the skill?
Evaluate a provided set of historical sources for creator, purpose, audience, context, and limitations.	Locate and evaluate potential sources for a historical question and revise source choices based on feedback.	Select, integrate, and contextualize appropriate sources to support an evidence-based historical interpretation.
Feedback: Guided questions, modeling, and discussion emphasize how context affects a source's usefulness.	Feedback: Peer/instructor feedback focuses on relevance, authority, perspective, and gaps in the source set.	Evidence: Final project and source reflection demonstrate intentional selection, evaluation, and use of information.
How will students receive and use feedback as they move through the progression?		
Students begin by evaluating sources selected by the instructor using substantial guidance. They then take increasing responsibility for locating and evaluating information themselves. By the final assignment, students independently determine which sources are appropriate and explain how the strengths, limitations, and perspectives of those sources inform their interpretation.		

STEP 4: Check the Scaffold

Review the progression you created.

- Does the skill appear **more than once** in the course?
- Do students have an opportunity to **practice before they are evaluated at a high level**?
- Does the level of complexity, independence, or authenticity increase over time?
- Do students receive **feedback they can use** in a later attempt?
- Are students given opportunities to reflect on their development?
- Does the final assessment actually provide evidence of the Essential Skill you identified?
- Can students recognize how the skill may transfer beyond this particular course?

You do not need a separate assignment at every stage. A scaffold may include short activities, portions of existing assignments, drafts, discussions, peer feedback, reflections, or other learning experiences.

NEXT STEP: Align the Assignment

Once you have identified where students will practice, develop, and demonstrate an Essential Skill, take a closer look at the assignment in which students will provide evidence of their learning.

The Essential Skills Transparent Assignment Design Template can help you make the assignment's purpose, skills, tasks, and criteria for success explicit to students.

Transparent Assignment Design Essential Skills Template

Transparent assignment design helps students understand why they are completing an assignment, what they are expected to do, and what successful work looks like. When developing Essential Skills, transparency can also help students recognize the skills they are practicing and how those skills may transfer beyond a single assignment or course.

Use this template to make the assignment's purpose, Essential Skills, tasks, and criteria for success explicit to students.

Adapted from Winkelmes (2013).

Assignment Information

Assignment Name: _____

Course: _____

Due Date: _____

STEP 1: Define the Purpose

Explain why students are completing this assignment and how it connects to the learning goals of the course. Consider:

- What will students learn through this assignment?
- Why is this learning important within the discipline?
- Which Essential Skill(s) will students develop?
- Where might students use this knowledge or skill beyond this assignment or course?

The purpose of this assignment is to...

This learning is important because...

EXAMPLE

The purpose of this assignment is to **help you apply psychological concepts and research to a complex, real-world situation**. Rather than simply describing or defining course concepts, you will use what you have learned to analyze a case, identify relevant psychological factors, and develop an evidence-informed recommendation.

STEP 2: Identify Essential Skills

Identify the Essential Skill or Skills students will practice throughout the assignment.

Essential Skill(s): _____

Then, rather than naming the skill along, describe what students will actually do with it. You can draw here on the Student Moves worksheet you completed.

In this assignment, students will...

- _____
- _____

EXAMPLE

Essential Skill: Knowledge Application

In this assignment, you will:

- **Identify** psychological concepts and evidence that are relevant to the case.
- Apply those concepts to interpret specific details of the situation.
- **Evaluate** which concepts or findings are most useful for addressing the problem.
- **Develop** a recommendation grounded in psychological knowledge and evidence.
- **Explain** how the evidence supports your proposed response.

STEP 3: Identify the Knowledge

Identify the disciplinary knowledge students will need in order to complete the assignment successfully. Consider:

- What concepts or content should students understand?
- What disciplinary conventions or approaches will they need?
- What tools, methods, or resources should they know how to use?

Students will draw on their knowledge of...

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

EXAMPLE

Students will draw on their knowledge of:

1. Psychological concepts and theories relevant to the case.
2. Research findings discussed in course readings and class activities.
3. Factors that influence human behavior within the context being examined.
4. The strengths and limitations of applying psychological research to individual situations.

STEP 4: Name the Specific Tasks

Describe what students need to do to complete the assignment successfully.

Use concrete action verbs and organize the work into clear steps. Include important choices students will need to make as well as common mistakes they should avoid.

To complete this assignment, students will need to:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

To be successful, they should avoid...

1.

2.

3.

4.

EXAMPLE

To complete this assignment:

1. **Review the case** and identify the primary problem or question that needs to be addressed.
2. **Identify relevant details from the case** that should inform your analysis.
3. **Select psychological concepts, theories, or research findings** that can help explain those details. Focus on the knowledge that is most useful rather than attempting to include every concept that might be related.
4. **Apply the selected psychological knowledge to the case.** Explain specifically how the concepts or evidence help you understand what is happening and why.
5. **Develop an evidence-informed recommendation** for responding to the problem presented in the case.
6. **Justify your recommendation** by connecting it directly to the psychological concepts, research, and case evidence used in your analysis.
7. **Identify at least one limitation or uncertainty** that should be considered when applying this knowledge to the situation.

Avoid

- Simply defining psychological concepts without applying them to the case.
- Listing multiple theories without explaining why they are relevant.
- Making recommendations based primarily on personal opinion or intuition.
- Treating psychological research as if it guarantees the same outcome for every individual or situation.
- Making claims that extend beyond what the available evidence supports.

STEP 5: Define What Success Looks Like

Describe the evidence that will show students have completed the task successfully. You can draw here on the work you did in the “Do/Show/Avoid” activity. Criteria should align directly with the Purpose, Skill, Knowledge and Tasks identified above.

Ask:

- What will strong work do?
- What will students need to show as evidence?
- What common problems should they avoid?
- How will the criteria be communicated: rubric, checklist, examples, feedback guide, or another format?

Criteria	What Successful Work Shows

EXAMPLE

Criteria	What Successful Work Shows
Selection of Knowledge	Psychological concepts, theories, and evidence are relevant to the specific problem presented in the case.
Application	Course knowledge is accurately connected to specific details of the case rather than simply summarized or defined.
Evidence-Informed Recommendation	The proposed response follows logically from the analysis and is supported by appropriate psychological knowledge and evidence.
Judgment & Limitations	The analysis recognizes relevant uncertainty, limitations, or contextual factors rather than applying disciplinary knowledge uncritically.

STEP 6: Identify the Knowledge

Students are better able to make use of an assignment when they can see how previous learning has prepared them for the task and when they will have opportunities to receive and use feedback.

Return to your Scaffolding Essential Skills Across a Course planning tool. Rather than creating a new scaffold here, identify the parts of that progression students need to know about as they complete this assignment.

Connect to Prior Practice

What experiences have students already completed that prepare them to use the Essential Skill successfully in this assignment?

Before beginning this assignment, students will have practiced the skill by:

Plan for Feedback

What feedback will students receive before or during the assignment? Consider feedback from:

- the instructor
- peers
- an external audience or stakeholder
- self-assessment or reflection
- examples, models, or criteria for success

Students will receive feedback through:

Make Feedback Useable

How will students act on that feedback?

Students will use feedback to:

EXAMPLE

You have already practiced parts of this process through our earlier mini-case activities, where you identified psychological concepts that could help explain a situation and distinguished between simply naming a concept and applying it to specific evidence.

Before completing the final consultation memo, you will submit a preliminary case analysis identifying:

1. the two or three features of the case you believe are most important;
2. the psychological concepts you are considering using;
3. one preliminary recommendation;
4. the evidence you believe could support that recommendation.

You will receive feedback on the relevance of the psychological concepts you selected, the strength of the connections between those concepts and the case evidence, and whether your preliminary recommendation follows from your analysis.

Use that feedback to reconsider, refine, or strengthen your analysis before submitting the final memo. You may decide that your original explanation or recommendation is not the strongest one. Changing your approach in response to evidence or feedback is part of the analytical process.

STEP 7: Reflection and Transfer

Essential Skills are intended to be useful across courses, disciplines, professional settings, and other contexts. A brief opportunity for reflection can help students recognize what they have learned about the skill, how they approached the work, and where they might use those strategies again.

Reflection does not need to be lengthy or graded as a separate assignment. It might take the form of a short written response, discussion question, exit ticket, portfolio annotation, presentation prompt, or addition to the final submission.

Choose a Reflection Focus

Consider which question would be most useful for this assignment.

Learning:

What did students learn about using the Essential Skill?

Process:

What strategies, decisions, or approaches helped them use the skill successfully?

Growth:

How has their approach to the skill changed through practice and feedback?

Transfer:

Where might they use this skill or a similar process again?

Add a Reflection or Transfer Prompt

Prompt for Students:

EXAMPLE

Learning:

What did this assignment help you understand about applying psychological knowledge to a complex situation?

Process:

How did you decide which psychological concepts or evidence were most useful for analyzing the case?

Growth:

Identify one decision you approached differently in the final assignment because of practice or feedback earlier in the course.

Transfer:

Where might you need to select and apply specialized knowledge to a new problem in another course, professional setting, or everyday context? What part of the process you used here could help you do that?