

Empowering Student Success: Fostering Independence in Learning

Students who are independent learners tend to do better in online courses than those who are less independent. The good news is that instructors can help students to become more independent learners.

Students need to become aware of their own role in their learning, embrace it, and develop learning practices that will be beneficial to them. Instructors can help by drawing attention to optimal learning behaviors and promoting reflection on one's own learning behaviors. It can be as simple as adding specific prompts into the instructions for assignments, discussions, and other learning activities – prompts that focus student attention on planning their work, monitoring their progress, and reflecting on both the learning achieved and the process by which it was achieved.

In the example below, notice how the bolded portion prompts students to prepare before they do the assignment, then also prompts monitoring of the completeness of the work.

In this module, read chapters 6 & 9 in the text and view the three videos provided, then prepare an analysis of the videos based on the frameworks described in the text. **Be sure to outline the frameworks before conducting the analysis and be sure to explain how your analysis addresses all of the points in the framework.**

In the next example, notice how none of it really addresses the paper and presentation project itself. It outlines a series of tasks for students to develop and improve their independence in all major aspects of project work – planning, monitoring, and evaluating.

The course project consists of a research paper and video presentation. It will be necessary to **prepare a timeline indicating the steps you plan to take in completing this work along with target deadlines** between now and the end of the semester. In the first module, you will **submit your plan**. In the third module, you **submit a progress report**, and in the fifth module, you will **submit a self-evaluation** using the rubric provided with the project instructions.

In this final example, notice how the instructor draws attention to the role of feedback in writing and prompts reflection on its value as an effective learning behavior.

Share your initial draft with your classmates in the writer's workshop forum. Incorporate the advice of your peers into your final draft. Submit the draft along with a **short paragraph describing what you changed as a result of feedback from peers and why.**