Imagination, Interaction, and Reflection in Online Discussion Forums:
Selected Assignments from the Preparing Future Faculty Program

The Assignment:
What would it be like to be a faculty member at your ideal institution? Imagine that you are such a person and write a story about yourself—the students you teach, the challenges you face with funding or colleagues, the work you do...

Student Work:

What Did the Students Think?

"Wonderful. It was weird for me at first because I am not used to writing stories but I found it liberating to dream without constraints and to use this as a tool to realize my end goal.

"Best assignment in class. Helped us visualize the future.

"This was excellent! I enjoyed stepping into the fictional world and doing something different for a change. I also enjoyed reading the other students' stories.

The Assignment:
Imagine the following: You are assistant professors serving on your institution’s curriculum review committee. The committee chair has asked you to review the attached syllabus and provide a list of specific comments to the author, Prof. John Doe...

Student Work:

What Did the Students Think?

"The course is actually going into far more detail, reading, and discussion than I thought which is good. I don’t feel like I’m getting that different an experience from the in-class course. Actually, I feel that in some ways I am getting a better experience online because of the opportunity for constant discussion.

"I was skeptical of an online format but I really feel engaged. . . . It has been great.

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The Assignment:
Take the Teaching Perspectives Inventory and present your results to the class in this forum. Mention how your preferred “styles of teaching” (preferences) are reflected in your teaching practice (what you actually do in and out of class).

Student Work:

What Did the Students Think?

"This is one of the few classes that I’ve done all the reading for. Without the reflective writing in Moodle, I know I would have skipped it. I’m so glad that I didn’t because I really liked the readings and gained a lot from them.

"Best part of the informal writing is thoughtful response from peers.

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