“I did ___. And I did ___. Then I did ___. Oh, and then I ___. Then they said ___, and in response I did ___. Then they seemed to say, so I did ___. Finally, I ___.”

That would be one way to write an evaluation. You could. Maybe you did. Maybe you will. Maybe it’s not necessary or enlightening, since our Program Description will list what we read and did (and our Program Description will accompany your self-eval in your transcript).

There are other ways. You could start at a different place. Try these Opening Gambits. That is, read the prompts, write them out, and fill in the blanks as you go. Take about 20 minutes to do this for all these openers. Then get together with members of your research group, or with your whole study group. Read some of your responses.

Here’s the truth. __________ is bullshit. Don’t get me wrong. I know what I’m talking about. I read On Bullshit… No, I didn’t read on bullshit; I read On Bullshit, the BOOK! This philosopher, Harry Frankfurt by name, helped me understand that __________ is bullshit. ___________

You’re never going to believe this, but I learned something true this quarter. College, eh? Go figure. What I learned was ______________. But that’s not the important thing. What’s important is that I used to believe ______________, and I changed my mind. Moving from belief to the truth is really hard. In this instance, it took ________________.

Statistics are bloodless and soul-less but they can be really, really useful. The next time I ______________, I’m going to put a pause in the action, go to the library, look up ______________. Why? Because ________________.

Dear Mom [Dad, Significant Other, Closest Friend I’ve Got],

I haven’t seen you in a while. We have a lot to talk about. I just want to get this on the agenda for when I see you next. I want to talk about __________. Do me a favor, will you? Read the attached on ______________. I ran across this in my research. You’re going to have an opinion, I bet, but here’s why we need to talk: _________________.

For now, just fill in the blanks as best you can with what comes to mind. Have your group help you pick the best start. Have them tell you why that one is the best. Consider using that opening gambit for drafting a self evaluation.
Another approach: Use your portfolio to help you write your self-eval, as described in these online portfolio/self-eval guidelines: http://academic.evergreen.edu/curricular/astro/portfolio.html

For each section of your portfolio (e.g. your essays and responses), write a Cover Paragraph:

- What did you learn?
- Demonstrate your learning with evidence from your portfolio.
- Be specific, substantial, and concise.
- Reflect on what you did and how it contributed to your learning
- Reflect on how this connects to program themes.

By next Wednesday, write a draft of a self evaluation.
1. You may use the Cover Paragraphs from your Portfolio, as described above.
2. Or you may use something like one of the Opening Gambits, in your own language and style. Sustain the idea and the tone established by your opening paragraph. Pick one that lets you write well. Pick one that helps you out of the “I-did” rut. Loosen up.
3. Write about what you have learned. That is, write about what you know now that you didn’t know at the beginning of the program. Tell the truth.
4. Have colleagues in your research group review, edit, and comment on your work. Do the same for them.

Take your draft self-eval to the workshop next Thursday.

Work on your portfolio and self-eval over break.

Have colleagues in your research group review, edit, and comment on your self-eval again. Do the same for them.

Write short peer evaluations of your teammates. See online guidelines.

Turn in your portfolio, self-eval, and peer evals Wed. of Week 9.

Write faculty evals, and bring them to your eval conference week 10.

For dates and details, see our syllabus.