

Reflecting on Teaching Practice

Reflection is an integral part of the teaching process. School activities in and outside the classroom create a natural environment for reflective teaching. Professional experience, healthy self-awareness, and genuine care for students and colleagues help teachers to reflect effectively. Reflective practices consist of in-the-moment reflection for immediate action, after-the-moment reflection for future action, and outside reflection for exchange of reflective experience among a teacher's colleagues and professional learning networks. Reflection promotes evidence-based changes in the classroom to advance teaching practices and is one of the cornerstones of a teacher's professional development and supports the quality of education in today's ever-changing world.

1. Why is reflection essential to my growth as a teacher?
2. How do I receive feedback about my teaching and lesson content?
3. How does reflection impact my next steps towards continued growth as a blended or online teacher?



to Consider

Reflection on the teaching process is one of the primary professional habits of teachers. Reflection helps refine current teaching practices and adjust learning goals and outcomes. Reflection is an important component of continuous improvement of the teaching process, and it can help with active student engagement in the learning process, cultivation of student-parent-teacher relationships, and one's own professional development. When teachers share reflection experiences, they help other teachers refine teaching practices for their students' good.

Reflection involves intentional actions including watching how students communicate and use the learning materials, as well as monitoring and tracking communications with students, parents, and colleagues. After information is gathered, teachers can look for patterns and reflect. Focusing on one pattern at a time helps a teacher to answer specific questions. More gathered information creates more opportunities for reflection. In addition to observing students in the classroom, students' written or verbal feedback and assessment results also provide information for reflection. A teacher can observe their students informally or formally. Informally, a teacher might take notes while watching how their students work in small groups or "breakout rooms" online. With a systematic approach, a teacher could add to the notes, and use them for reflection on the learning activity and associated student engagement. Feedback from students and parents can be gathered using online tools such as surveys and evaluations. Lesson checklists and similar tools provide additional opportunities to reflect. In online environments, a quick poll or questions about the learning experience can be given immediately after a class session. Additionally, fellow teachers and other colleagues can be invited to make observations as a way to garner feedback. These types of informal observations, and subsequent conversations, can extend to teacher-organized professional development sessions at a school level.

There are three types of reflection: in-the-moment reflection for immediate action, after-the-moment reflection for future action, and outside reflection for continued exchange of reflective experience among a teacher's colleagues. Taking notes during a class activity is an example of in-the-moment reflection and might be used to help students who need assistance or are disengaged. After-the-moment, the teacher might use notes and student or group assessment results to see how to adjust classroom facilitation or the quality of the learning materials. Outside reflection practices go beyond schools, and even school districts, and can involve teachers from different states or even countries interacting in online teacher communities or professional learning networks. In many cases, it is beneficial to opt-in to such professional interactions to share reflection success stories and promote reflection practices in education. Reflection promotes evidence-based changes in the classroom to advance teaching practices and is one of the cornerstones of a teacher's professional development.

KEY Elements