

Teaching and Learning: The Role of Reflective Practice

Reflection has the potential to provide us with meaningful and tangible learning opportunities. The ability to apply lessons learned and make the time for reflection is further challenged when working in environments that are uncertain and ever-changing. However, it is important to ask ourselves about the cost of *not* doing so. What challenges or problems will we repeat when we do not take the time to reflect? What should we consider changing or continuing that works well?; and what do we want to avoid in the future?

Reflective practice is defined as “learning through and from experience towards gaining new insights of self and practice” (Finlay, 2008). Not only does it provide instructors with an opportunity to consider their own teaching, it also helps you identify how students learn best, thereby developing a more effective environment for both yourself and for your students.



Through reflection, we can also develop problem-solving skills. Evidence shows that instructors who reflect more often are not only more confident in their teaching, but also more innovative and often have more engagement from students in their courses (Cambridge International Education, 2020).

Reflection is very personal. It may take some time to determine what works best for you. There is no single “right” way to do this. You can consider reflecting in a number of ways, including (but not limited to):

- By time (e.g. after each lesson, each week, each semester, etc.)
- By flow of course content (e.g. after each unit)
- By course structure (e.g. after every test, after lectures, after seminars, etc.)

Mini Reflection Activity

As you consider your experience over this past semester, consider:

- What challenges did you encounter?
- What worked well? What solutions or innovations did you use that you would recommend to others?
- What lessons or ideas will you bring forward into your future teaching as a result?