

Reflective Essay on a Good Teacher

Reflective teaching means looking at what you do in the classroom, thinking about why you do it, and thinking about if it works. This becomes a process of self-observation and self-evaluation. In order for one to be a successfully reflective teacher, you have to understand different means that you can use to learn about your class and use them to guide you. In a much deeper level, reflective teaching is therefore a means of professional development which begins in our classroom. By collecting information about what goes on in our classroom, and then analyzing and evaluating this information, we identify and explore our own practices and underlying beliefs.

Why it is important? Many teachers already think about their teaching and talk to colleagues about it too. You might think or tell someone that “My lesson went well” or “My students didn’t seem to understand the lesson you just did” or “you could not handle your students because they were badly behaved today. In the last few months, student teaching has enhanced this idea in so many levels.

When you are teaching with a cooperating teacher, it is important to look back after each lesson and critic what you did or how you think the lesson went. Take a few minutes before the next lesson and jot down notes on what you thought about the experience in general and remember to not only look for the positives but also things that were challenging. When you have it all down, go to the teacher you are working with and talk ready to discuss the experiences you just had in that past class. Look at what worked well for you and how you could use all that to help you with the next lesson. Look at your lesson from a student’s point of view. Did the students understand? How were they acting in class? What things did you notice that needs to be addressed? Things you should look for in your lesson plan would be different ways which you improved them cognitively, psychologically, socially and morally.

Students feel and will appreciate coming to your classes when they see how the lessons are helping them get better in the above ways. So, it is important that you include methods and ways in your daily plans that make students grow. Relate what you are teaching them to something they enjoy doing or things that interest them, sports they all love, and things they do out of school. Students will like you as a teacher if you are going around class and giving them credit on what they are doing, when you show you are interested in what is going on in class, and when they see you treat them with care. They also want you to challenge them in the way they evaluate themselves.

As we know, physical education is not for the physically fit students only but more so for every student in your classes no matter the ability level. In your lesson plan, ask them questions (reflective questions) that make them realize and find answers as to why they are doing this unit, why they are doing this lesson and why you have it planned the way you have it. Let them give you responses knowing that there is no right or wrong responses.

Accept what they are giving as feedback and use that to help you build on after that class or after a unit. At pioneer, this happened a lot because my teacher had me teaching a unit of plyometrics and students would rather play a team game than do something that everyone is watching them. After each lesson we had reflection time and we used one of the ways my developed to help get an idea of what students thought about the class and the lesson. There were about 4 different questions asked about the lesson and each student was required to answer on question only. So you had different view and comments to build your next lesson from.

However, without more time spent focusing on or discussing what has happened, we may tend to jump to conclusions about why things are happening. Reflective teaching therefore implies a more systematic process of collecting, recording and analyzing our thoughts and observations, as well as those of our students, and then going on to making changes. If a lesson went well we can describe it and think about why it was successful. In your lesson plans, make sure the learning objectives and instructions are clear and well thought out. This is the part that basically tells student that the lesson will either be boring or a good one depending on how those areas are presented.

Making sure everything is well detailed out is one way to avoid student's confusion etc. It is always a good idea to have these lessons and everything done a week or two ahead of time so that you will have more time to adjust or change anything that needs changing. Your strategies should be constructed in a more unique way that gets students always looking forward and excited to do what you have planned for them. What you get from the self evaluation and student evaluation is something you will need to apply in the next lesson. So make sure you have them give you constructive feedback as a teacher

If the students didn't understand a language point we introduced we need to think about what we did and why it may have been unclear. It takes your students a learning experience to always remember something about the lesson. It might be an experience where you give learning cues or an experience where students question your way of presenting your ideas that helps them understand what is going on in class. With that in mind, you have to remember each student's learning experience is not same as another student's. That is dependent of individual differences and as a physical educator, you are going to have to change with how you present so you can meet each students needs.

Your goal should be to have every student is reached and walk out of your class having benefitted on the same level as any other student. During student teaching at pioneer, a way this was fulfilled was by grouping students in small groups so they can easily do a task on different stations together. In these groups, separating groups into people who are not best friends, people with different ability level was helpful in that they all didn't have time to goof off but they all worried about accomplishing the task at hand. This served different purposes; made sure that students were involved actively.

When students see their peers pushing hard, they are encouraged to do the same. It also ensures that their behavior and set standards are followed. You should be the one pacing the class and making sure that your directions and instructions are reaching every student across the board and at the same time. Time is very crucial in this type of class in that you have your lesson dependent on minutes. When students are moving from one station to another, make sure you are in control of that because they will tend to go on a tangent and get distracted.

Ask how they are doing as you have them move and this plays to your advantage when they give you verbal communication. It is helpful and you should use it appropriately. One of the things you want to try and cover in your teaching environment is your awareness of where, who and what your students are. By that, you want to know what students will not fully do stuff unless you are there to guide them. Some will even go as far as cheating through these activities. What do you do when you notice unwanted behavior in students? Students who want to cheat the system and not give the required amount like everyone else?

If students are misbehaving – what were they doing, when and why? After having done this and watched cooperating teachers, dealing with student behavior is one of those important things you must make sure you do. You should demand respect from those you are educating and it is important to understand they will respect you as much as you respect them. So setting up a good example for them is important.

Showing them that you respect the school rules, codes and expectations should start with you as an educator. You will be using different equipment's and the way you handle them and treat these equipment's will set a tone on how your students respond to the same equipment's. Let your students know that there are more students around and they will be using the same equipment's. Same goes for you as an educator. Understanding that other teachers will be using the same stuff will be a key lead to a durable environment. Look back on how you had students learn how to treat everything and everyone as though they matter.

If your students are not complying to your expectations, call them aside after class so they don't feel like they are the center of attention. Talk to them about what you expect and let them know you are watching them. Sometimes these students do interact with teachers in different classes and there will be times when you have to find out if they are only behaving a certain way only in your class or in other classes too.

Getting information to your fellow colleagues is important because some students will come to your class after having dealt with hard issues in other classes or at home and if you are the last teacher they have in class, they will most likely come off as bad kids to you.

So, understanding your students through other teacher is very important. When you talk to them and you find out they are just misbehaving for no reason, notify their parents about the issue. Look to not only report what they are doing wrong but what is going on and how you can help them.

You will find out that in most cases, students don't want issues to reach their parents, so when you get parents involve, it is sometimes better because parents know how far they can go with their students. But they say that blood is thicker than water and when students do tend to defy all orders and keep this behavior going to either test your patience or see what actions you will take. If this happens, you have done three things; talked to the student, your fellow teachers, parents.

The next move will be to notify your boss about the issue and leave it at their hands to deal with. This will always help you look back years down the line and remember the best way to avoid any cases coming against you.

As you can see the process of reflection comes in a wide range of ways. You may begin a process of reflection in response to a particular problem that has arisen with one or your classes, or simply as a way of finding out more about your teaching. There are also other ways to help you become a better reflective educator

Teacher diary is a key way to make you best at this. This can be during the lesson plan as students are busy with activities. It is the easiest way to begin a process of reflection since it is purely personal. After each lesson you write in a notebook about what happened. You may also describe your own reactions and feelings and those you observed on the part of the students. You are likely to begin to pose questions about what you have observed. Diary writing does require a

certain discipline in taking the time to do it on a regular basis. You should remember that all these experiences you have down, are going to help you understand yourself, students, and more importantly your environment you are working with.

On the other hand, Peer observation can be useful in making you a reflective teacher. Invite a colleague to come into your class to collect information about your lesson. This may be with a simple observation task or through note taking. This will relate back to the area you have identified to reflect upon. For example, you might ask your colleague to focus on which students contribute most in the lesson, what different patterns of interaction occur or how you deal with errors. As a student teacher from Houghton College, this happened in a variety of ways. One of these was when the college professor came to observe you.

Not only was having there creating more pressure on you to use what you have already learned from other lesson experiences but also having him college information about you that time and again you might not notice. When he has that down, sitting back and talking to him about it was crucial in that it was used to look back at what you would have done differently and how you would have gone about dealing with certain situations in class.

Another way was recording lessons is another way to help you become a reflective teacher. Video or audio recordings of lessons can provide very useful information for reflection. You may do things in class you are not aware of or there may be things happening in the class that as the teacher you do not normally see. You will be looking for things such as; aspects of teacher talk, how much do you talk? What about? Are instructions and explanations clear? How much time do you allocate to student talk? How do you respond to student talk? Video recordings can be useful in showing you aspects of your own behavior. Where do you stand? Who do you speak to? How do you come across to the students? From a different point of view, recording is not allowed in schools so you will and might want to get permission from the teacher as well as from the students themselves.

But if this happened and you got video of your lesson and students performing it, you will notice so much that might pass or you would have not seen during the lesson. Your eyes are not always seeing everything in class but if you have the recordings going on as you are moving around, it is like having 360 degree view of the class at all time. So, when you review it and listen to everything, you will know what is coming at you and how to change things around for the next lesson.

Lastly, Student feedback as a reflective tool is something you can come back to. You can also ask your students what they think about what goes on in the classroom. Their opinions and perceptions can add a different and valuable perspective. This can be done with simple questionnaires or learning diaries for example.

Now that you have all that, the question becomes, what do you do next? Reflective teaching is a cyclical process, because once you start to implement changes, then the reflective and evaluative cycle begins again. What are you doing? Why are you doing it? How effective is it? How are the students responding? How can you do it better? As a result of your reflection you may decide to do something in a different way, or you may just decide that what you are doing is the best way. And that is what professional development is all about.