

Chapter 9: Reflective Practice

Use the following questions and activities to reflect on and make changes to your practice.

1. In your assessment practices, do you start by assuming each student is at zero and then add marks for the quality of their work as per your assessment criteria? Or, do you start by giving each student 100 percent and then deduct for errors and omissions? Why did you choose the strategy you utilize? Have you clearly communicated your reasons to your students?
2. Consider using music in your classroom in certain circumstances. Survey your students for their top five suggestions, and be sure to use some of their suggestions where appropriate.
3. Spend some time thinking about what your students smell in your classroom. Is there a way you can utilize their sense of smell on certain occasions in order to enhance their positive feelings of being in your classroom?
4. Before or after school, when there is no one around and you are not distracted, stand in the doorway of your classroom. Imagine you are seeing this classroom for the first time. Look carefully at each of the following.
 - a. The arrangement of the desks, tables, and other furniture
 - b. The wall color
 - c. What is displayed on each of the walls

Next, determine how much of what is on display is teacher driven and how much is student work or student controlled. Consider the following.

- a. How motivated would you feel to learn in a room that looked like this if you were a student?
- b. How would you feel as a student walking into a classroom that looked like yours?

Based on your answers to these questions, make any changes that you believe would either enhance the learning that goes on in your classroom or that would make students feel better being in that space.

5. Try an experiment on one of your in-class assessments by printing it in grayscale in order to make the students focus more on what the test is asking of them. You might want to do this only with the particularly challenging questions on the exam. Compare both the degree of concentration you see in your students during the assessment and their test results compared to previous assessments. If you notice an improvement, use this strategy on occasion, especially on assessments that have significant weightings.