12 Benefits of Reflective Teaching and Learning

Reflective teaching involves using reflection techniques to convey, analyse, and deliver information, in the goal of generating feedback. The reflection process is a part of a cycle that should be continuous if you strive to achieve positive results. Learn more about reflective teaching on our site in this article.

What are the benefits of reflective teaching? **Reflective teaching has benefits for teachers and students alike. Teachers can use reflective teaching techniques to improve their teaching methodologies. Reflective practice can consist of teaching instruction, conducting self-assessments, considering improvements, while problem solving and developing analytical skills.**

Over time, experience in this area will help you in developing a critical eye for troubleshooting. Naturally, this practice can also benefit the students' experience by improving their critical thinking skills, heightening their motivation and boosting their overall performance levels.

In this article we will contemplate reflective teaching and its benefits for teachers and students alike. If you are a teacher, tutor, lecturer, or teaching assistant (TA) who wants to improve their performance or liven up a class session, this article is for you. Getting started is rather easy: you only need to show some level of commitment and willingness to engage your mind, analyse previous sessions and look for ways to improve on your weak points. Let's get started.

Benefits of Reflective Teaching For Teachers

Teachers benefit from reflective teaching practices in a variety of ways. A major part of this practice includes planning your sessions, analyzing, and improving your previous sessions to improve your delivery techniques and develop a better understanding of your topics and yourself, as a teacher. If you are looking to improve your teaching experience, reflective practices have a lot to offer.

1. Professional Growth

Reflective teaching can help to promote your professional growth. By carrying out an extensive inner thought process, you can have a much better understanding of your strengths and weaknesses. Studies such as this article entitled *Reflective Practices: A Means to Teacher Development* (2017), demonstrates that reflective teaching helps to facilitate professional growth. You can start by practising simple reflective practices such as preparing and then analyzing your class sessions. By noting down your goals and the results, you can use the information to adjust your teaching routine, modify teaching techniques and improve your strategies when addressing the class.

Reflective teaching really does help and the benefits are both in terms of short-term and long-term. **Simply begin with a reflective journal and write down your thoughts after each session.** Recording certain activities or your sessions through video can also be an awesome idea, but this might cost you a bit more in terms of time and investment.

2. Enhance Innovation

Reflective teaching is not a complicated practise. As an organised teacher, you normally prepare and keep track of your lessons, right? Or perhaps those lessons were prepared for you? Lucky you! **After you have taught your lesson, take a few minutes to assess your teaching.** Do this the very same day, since your feelings and memories will be fresh. Be sure to note down the positive experiences, along with the more challenging ones. Later on, you can take the time to find ways to improve those problem areas.

You can also use reflective teaching methods to search for innovations on how to **improve your teaching methods**. Reflective teaching and innovation fully complement each other. For instance, if you notice that your students' interest is waning, perhaps you can use screen projectors, online platforms, and web applications to improve your delivery and capture their interest. You could also use the same methods to administer tests and evaluations.

A major component of reflective teaching is based on **needs assessments**. Recognizing that your methods are perhaps falling short is an important part of the process. Research and networking will help you to keep up with new and innovative teaching techniques, while expanding your professional network with new colleagues across the globe. You can do this by joining and learning from dedicated forums like the one our our site.

3. Facilitate Teaching

Teaching can be quite a challenge. It can be challenging to plan lessons, teach classes and then manage and assess your students' progression. Successful teachers strive to learn all of their student's names, while creating a safe and secure classroom setting. They also try to ensure that all of the students are following along and keeping in line with the program. **Reflective practice will ensure that each student is benefitting from the learning experience.** Motivation is the key to a successful learning environment for both the student and the teacher. Engaging your students will improve the overall experience. For instance, if individual participation is a problem, the students may prefer to solve problems in small groups. Reflective teaching techniques can really help you to understand student preferences and make it easier for you to deliver your message.

4. Boost Teacher-Student Relationship

Teachers really value their relationships with their students. If you want to help your students to understand your teaching methods, it is important to **cultivate positive individual relationships with your students**. Reflective teaching practises really help you to think about each student as an individual learner with unique needs. Employing various reflective teaching strategies can help you to analyze your students' performance, behavior, and needs, while learning more about your students' personalities and traits. Such information can be very beneficial to your overall teaching experience, both in the short and long term. Your students are more likely to perform better if they feel safe and comfortable, and enjoy your teaching sessions. You will find it easier to engage directly with your students and **chances are good that you will also really begin to enjoy teaching itself and become more motivated to continue.**

5. Make Lessons More Lively and Interesting

A dull class is every teacher's nightmare. You know the feeling and the number of times you look at the clock. To avoid this experience, you can **implement some reflective teaching strategies to troubleshoot and liven up your classroom.** We all dream of a lively classroom where

students actively contribute to the class.

For example, you can **start your classes with a "refresher session"** and review what was taught in the last lesson. A fun way to do this is in a game show or competition setting. Your students can give their ideas, raise queries, and contribute towards answering your questions. Not only does this jog their memory, but **it also makes the class lively, fun, and engaging**. Take the time to review the material and assess their knowledge recall. Students are more likely to perform better if they are allowed to actively ask questions, or give feedback on the information they are learning. As a teacher, you also have a unique opportunity to hear about new perspectives from your students.

6. Enhance Problem Solving

Experienced teachers would agree that a major part of teaching includes strong coping skills. **Learning to solve problems and meet challenges effectively and efficiently is of the utmost importance**. Reflective teaching practices can help you improve your skills in solving problems and challenges. For instance, a teacher can use previous teaching experience (their own, or a colleague's) to search for solutions for students who face learning problems.

The practice allows teachers (and tutors) to devise **strategies and map out personalised techniques** for their struggling students. By drawing on your knowledge and past experience, you become more resourceful and confident when obstacles arise in the classroom (source) Reflective teaching encourages you to learn to cope with problems (and not flee them) as you teach. It also incites your creativity and problem-solving skills. As a teacher, this is not only beneficial, but most significantly crucial for intellectual stability and a long, healthy career.

7. Boost Classroom Democracy

Encouraging a democratic environment within your classroom has its benefits. You can interact more freely with your students, raise issues, and deliver knowledge much easier. Democracy within the class environment also makes it **easier for your students to open discussions with you or between themselves**. Having a democratic environment includes adopting and including the principles of democracy within your classroom. This can include respecting human rights, equality, freedom, while **discussing intercultural differences and shared cultural values**. As a teacher, this can help you to prepare your students for the outside world and allow them to think critically and interact with more respect for cultural differences both inside and outside the classroom environment.

Benefits of Reflective Learning For Students

Students can also benefit from using reflective practices in their studies. In this context, reflection includes, analyzing, and improving learning acquisition to improve knowledge assimilation, while developing an improved level of understanding of the lessons and topics. Including reflective learning strategies in your lesson plans will benefit students in the following ways:

8. Improve Student Performance

Student performance can be improved by using reflective learning practices. Since **individual students can reflect on class sessions, they will identify, and improve on their weaknesses** to ameliorate their overall performance in a topic. According to research such as *The Effects of Student Reflection on Academic Performance and Motivation* by Derek Cavilla (source) students who use reflective practices develop metacognitive skills, which are very important transversal life skills. Reflection can help you to obtain a deeper understanding of a concept or a topic, while reflective practices stimulate your ability to remember difficult topics and formulate solutions, in moments of crisis. Students can use reflective practices to improve their performance in different subjects by **using a reflective learning diary** to note down key theories, formulas, and lessons. It is also very important to note down areas of difficulty. For teachers, **these reflective learning diaries provide valuable insights into what works well and what does not work in your teaching techniques and lessons.**

9. Boost Engagement in Class

Students detest dull classes, as much as their teachers do. In the case of a less than inspiring lesson, students can p**rovide productive feedback for teachers, by using their reflective learning diary** to express their ideas or suggestions. Students are much more likely to understand difficult topics if they are active in their learning process. By providing such important feedback, they feel that they have a say in how they are learning.

For example, it is important to vary the rhythm of the class from week to week. Why not consider using brainstorming sessions or mind maps to recall what was done in a previous lesson. While working in small groups, the students are free to be innovative and creative in their presentation styles. Each student or group can **share their ideas, raise queries, and contribute**.

In this flipped classroom setting, the roles are reversed and the students become the teachers since they are given the floor to explain what was taught to them. This unexpected turn of events can surprise the students and **make the lesson much more interactive and engaging**. Active learning is not only about assimilating knowledge and practical theory, it is also about actively assuming one's responsibility in the learning process. Knowledge is power; however **sharing your knowledge with others is even more powerful.**

10. Develop Critical Thinking and Coping Skills

For students, reflective learning can help **improve their skills in solving problems and challenges**. Most students face many different challenges in their attempts to learn new concepts, lessons, subjects, etc. Using reflection will improve their problem-solving abilities and stimulate their cognitive thinking and analytical skills.

For instance, when faced with problems or questions related to coursework, students can formulate and note down the issue and then **search for creative solutions**, such as asking a classmate or friend for assistance or advice. Developing critical thinking and coping skills will greatly benefit their ability to focus and understand their studies. By noting down troublesome areas, they will be more free to learn and concentrate on finding the appropriate solutions. This will definitely have an effect on their performance and confidence levels (*Critical thinking and reflective practice The role of information literacy, Monica Vezzosi,* source). Students who wish to improve their critical thinking and problem-solving skills, as well as their creativity levels should strive to adopt reflective practices as part of their study routines.

11. Enhance Student Motivation

Motivation is the motor of our classrooms. It is also very important to students. Students who lack motivation can exhibit poor performance and encounter problems with learning acquisition. This can sometimes lead to absence and erratic behaviour such as overall indifference or skipping a few classes, here and there. For students who lack motivation and investment, reflective learning practices can **encourage them to face and overcome their learning issues and problems**.

Studies show that reflection can have a direct impact on motivation and performance levels. In using reflective learning techniques to improve student motivation, **teachers can improve relations with their students**. They can empower their students to take control of the situation by encouraging them to adopt an analytical approach to learning. In critically thinking about their learning process, students are able to better understand themselves, from their personalities, to their limits and behaviour patterns. **A motivated student who is successfully learning is more likely to perform better in class**. Those who are less motivated may need some assistance in order to take charge and assume more responsibility in the learning process. In this way, reflective learning strategies foster a productive learning environment for the individual learner and class as a whole.

12. Improve Overall Effectiveness

Teachers who **encourage students to form learning groups** may find the overall experience is much more effective if the students include reflection as part of their routine. Learning groups are effective, since they create peer forums to **share thoughts, process new information, and encourage interaction** in a controlled learning environment. This type of activity enhances the development of critical thinking and analytical skills.

A good illustration of this is a learning group that meets to discuss previous lessons, generate questions, and hold discussions on relevant topics. Reflective practices can **help improve their assimilation** and recall capacity, while boosting motivation levels through active group performance, as well as critical thinking skills development (source). Reflective practices make group discussions much more appealing, interesting, engaging and rewarding. An effective learning group will benefit the entire class and stimulate active investment during the lessons.

Sharing reflective teaching processes with direct colleagues may be intimidating due to social pressures. If you would like to learn methodologies, techniques and best practices from other teachers around the globe, join our reflective teaching forum. On our forum, teachers can share their didactic approaches, ideas, and self reflective processes without fear of judgement from direct colleagues.

Related Questions

What are the benefits of reflective teaching? **Reflective teaching offers many benefits for teachers and students alike. As previously mentioned, reflective teaching practices can boost creativity, motivation and critical thinking and the development of metacognitive skills.**

Does reflective teaching affect performance? **Reflective practices can improve performance for both teachers and students. Teachers can use the techniques to analyse students behaviour and identify potential weaknesses and strengths in their teaching methods. When students provide individual feedback on their learning process, teachers can better understand which methods work and which ones need improvement.**

How can students use reflective learning practices in their studies? **Reflective learning practices can be very beneficial both to students who are excelling and those who are not. Reflection encourages students to assume responsibility in their learning and this empowers them. Reflection can improve performance, memory, and motivation levels. It can be part of a strategy to engage with classmates and develop fruitful relationships with teachers and classmates.**

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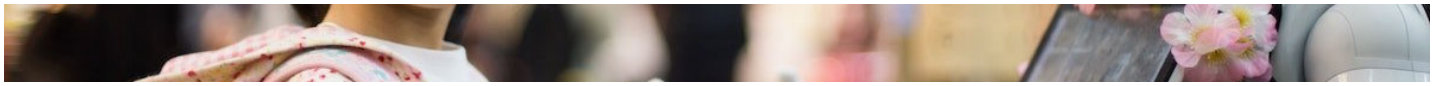

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