



Module 14

Reflective Teaching

Teacher Development

Video Length: Approximately 14 Minutes
Notes to the Trainer

For best results, have participants go through the readings for this module prior to viewing the video. This module varies somewhat from the other modules in that reflection is 100% a “learning by doing” topic. Reflection is often an individual process. However, it is also one that can benefit from sharing ideas and experiences with peers. As you work through this module, use pairs and group work whenever that might be effective. After each activity, debrief answers and use them for further discussion. Refer back to the main points and readings when appropriate. It is important that teachers apply the concepts in the module to their own classrooms and situations. The goals for this module are to create an understanding of the need for reflective teaching and to suggest ideas for supporting this form of professional development in the language classroom.

See Appendix A for additional handouts that can be used for general observation and discussion tasks with any of the modules.

Before Viewing

Ask participants to think of a class that they have recently taught and to write a Teacher Diary entry per the description and suggested questions below. You can adjust questions to fit teachers’ settings, as needed. Adapted from *Reflective Teaching: Exploring our Own Classroom Practice* from Julie Tice, <http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/think/methodology/reflection.shtml>

Teacher Diary. This is a simple way to begin the process of reflection. After each lesson, you make notes in a journal or “teaching diary” about what happened in class that day. You may also describe your own reactions and feelings as well as those that you observed on the part of the students. You are likely to begin to pose questions about what you have observed. Diary writing requires a certain discipline in taking the time to do it on a regular basis, but it need not be a lengthy process.

Reflective Teaching Diary Questions. Ask yourself questions such as the following on the *Reflective Teaching Diary Questions* form that follows. It contains some suggestions for areas to focus on to help you start your diary. You don’t have to answer all the questions all the time. You can freely pick and choose.

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Reflective Teaching Diary Questions

Lesson Objectives

- Did students understand the lesson? How did I measure or determine this?
- Were the basic objectives (goals) met? How do I know this?
- Was anything too fast or slow (pacing), easy or difficult (level)?
- Is there anything I would do differently next time in preparation?
- What will I plan for the next set of follow-up objectives?

Activities and Materials

- What materials and activities did we use? Which were effective? Ineffective? Why?
- How much English did the students use, and in what ways?
- What percentage of the time did I talk and use English? Did they talk and use English?
- Did the activities and materials interest (motivate) students, and keep them engaged?
- Which ones did they enjoy most? Least?
- Were there any “surprises” in today’s class? If yes, how did they affect the lesson?
- Was there enough variation in types of activities and materials?
- Were there other activities or materials I could have used?
- What about future lessons as a continuation of this lesson?

Classroom Management

- Did students stay on task (doing what they were supposed to be doing)?
- Were my instructions clear?
- Was I able to address individual students’ academic and behavioral needs?
- Were the transitions between activities and classes smooth?
- Are there changes I would like to make in this area?
- Did I provide opportunities for all students to participate?

Overall

- If I teach the lesson again, what will I do that is the same? What will I do differently?
- In reviewing answers to the questions above, what resources or information do I need?

Today’s Lesson Was Like a....

River? Bird with a broken wing? Candy with a sour middle? Sunrise on a summer day?

Come up with an image or metaphor that captures the essence of the lesson.

What will it lead to tomorrow?

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Preview Vocabulary

Terms	Definitions
Exposure (to the outside world)	Giving students opportunities to connect their language learning with real-world experiences outside the classroom (e.g. fieldtrips, exchanges, community-based projects, news, etc.).
Firsthand learning, knowledge.	Firsthand learning or knowledge means to experience something and learn about it directly and for oneself, as in “exposure to the outside world” (above).
Guided Language Acquisition Design (GLAD)	Instructional approach for grades K-8 for low and intermediate language level learners that provides authentic opportunities for use of academic language, maintains highest standards and expectations for all students, and fosters voice and identity. Primary language is provided by trained, bilingual teachers, trained bilingual aides, trained parents, or cross-age / peer tutoring. Emphasizes teacher collaboration. Listening, speaking, reading and writing are integrated among all content areas with an emphasis on science, social studies, and literature.
Inquiry-based learning; reflection	Inquiry-based reflection or learning is the process of asking questions in an open-ended way in order to explore new knowledge domains, find solutions, or make plans for change.
Lifelong learning	The practice of learning—formally or informally—at all phases throughout one’s life.
“On the spot”	An on-the-spot decision or action is one that is unplanned and occurs at the point of need (idiom).
Professional development	The systematic practice of improving one’s skills and knowledge within a professional domain; in this case, teaching.
Reflective teaching practices	To systematically and actively think about what happens in the classroom, both in terms of the teaching itself and in terms of the learner response, and then to try to improve it.

Now start the video. Listen to the introduction. Complete the guided observation and reflection tasks for each of the video segments. The next part of the manual is for trainees and is available on separate pages for ease of copying.

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Module 14, Reflective Teaching

Introduction, Expanded Narrative

Good teachers are always learning: learning from students, learning from their own trial and error, learning from peers and colleagues, learning from mentors and supervisors, and learning from academic information in their field. Good teachers continue to learn throughout their careers. This is called “life-long learning” or “ongoing professional development.” One tool that can help teachers develop professionally is known as “reflective teaching practice.” Reflective teaching is the focus of this final module.

Module Focus

Reflective teaching means thinking about what happens in the classroom, both in terms of the teaching itself, and in terms of the learner response, and then, trying to improve it. We can ask ourselves...

- Were the goals of the session met? Why or why not?
- What worked well? What didn't?
- Did learners act as expected? Why or why not?
- How can class sessions be improved to provide opportunities for better learning?

Video Segment #1 and 2, Listen and Reflect [Read before viewing.]

Use the *Reflective Teaching Practice Observation Guide* on the following two pages to guide viewing of these segments.

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Reflective Teaching Practice Observation Guide

Video Segment #1

This is an observation and comparison activity. Think of a class you have recently taught.

Use Part A below to write your personal reflection. Then, listen to what the teachers in Video Segment #1 have to say as they reflect on their current teaching practices. Use the back of this handout or more paper if you need more space.

Use Part B of this guide to take notes about and analyze the other teachers' reflections.

Part A

Finish the following statements using your own words.

I believe that a good teacher...

The most important thing I try to accomplish in class every day is to...

Part B

Listen to other teachers and take notes on what they say about their beliefs and practices. Also look for answers to the questions...

- What beliefs and practices do they seem to have in common?
- What differences do they have?

Now compare Parts A and B. How do these teachers' reflections compare to your own?

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Reflective Teaching Practice Observation Guide, Continued:

Video Segment #2

Again, think of a class you have recently taught. It can be the same class or a different class.

Use Part C below to write your personal reflection. Then, listen to what the teachers in Video Segment #2 have to say as they reflect on what they would like to be able to do in the future and on some of their ideas for helping make those ideas a reality.

Use Part D of the guide to take notes about and analyze the other teachers' reflections.

Part C

Finish the following statements using your own words.

As a teacher, my hope for myself and my students is that...

My plans for the future are to...

Part D

Listen to other teachers and take notes on what they say about their hopes (wishes), dreams, and plans for the future. Also look for answers to the questions...

- What hopes, dreams, and plans do they seem to have in common?
- What differences do they have?

Now compare Parts C and D. How do these teachers' reflections compare to your own?

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Further Reflections

[Read and answer after viewing.]

Teachers in this video share some of their reflections with us, and they model for us many of characteristics of reflective practices: They showed us that they:

- Are caring. They care about students as individual persons, about their needs, and about their learning. They recognize both the similarities and differences of their students.
- Are enthusiastic about helping students to learn better.
- Are curious and interested in ideas that may improve classroom learning.
- Feel comfortable doing self-analysis, and they are willing to put in the effort to do it well.
- Take responsibility both for solving the problems of their own classrooms, and for their own professional and skills development
- Are open-minded. They are open to and not threatened by ideas that may conflict with personal beliefs about the different aspects of their teaching situation.
- Have the energy to implement changes indicated by the reflection process.
- Enjoy working with colleagues on program development and professional development goals.

When you look in the mirror, how many of these characteristics do you see in yourself? Are there any that you would like to further develop or work toward?

Summary Discussion

1. As part of the pre-viewing and viewing activities for this module, you had an opportunity to practice with the Teacher Diary and Observation Guide activities. There are other forms of reflective practices as well; for example, peer observation (in Module 13). What are some ways in which peer observation and reflective teaching relate to each other, or reinforce each other?
2. Choose one or more of the recommended readings for this module to help guide this discussion question. What other forms of reflective teaching practices are recommended? Which ones seem like good possibilities for you, and why?
3. What form(s) of reflective teaching do you already use? What resources or support will you need if you decide to begin reflective teaching.

Module 14: Reflective Teaching

Now You Try It—An Action Plan

Step 1

You can read some of the articles on the topic of contextualizing language (see Module 14 *Readings* plus the *List of Additional Readings and Resources* below). Using the video, you have seen a few examples and ideas from other teachers' classes.

Now, think about the information that you have observed and discussed above. Then choose one of the reflective practices from this module (e.g. teacher diary, regular discussion group with peers, mental debriefing). Analyze your choice(s). What are the strengths? What are the challenges? Talk about your ideas with others.

Step 2

Create a timeline (calendar) for carrying out your reflective activities. Decide if you will work entirely alone, or with one or more partners.

Step 3

Begin the reflection process according to a timeline that works well for you.

Step 4

Plan to check in with one or more other colleagues (peers) in the future and exchange ideas on how the reflective process has been working. Make adaptations, as needed.

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Answer Key to Module 14, Reflective Teaching

Here are some suggested directions for answers to the questions for this module. Actual answers may vary depending on local context and the kinds of experience that viewers bring to the task of interpreting and applying video and text concepts.

Module 14, Video Segment #1

Part A

This will vary on an individual basis.

Part B

Some of the comments from other teachers in the video with regard to their beliefs and practices include the following.

Teacher #1 (blue dress, student posters behind her):

- Makes small, incremental changes in the classroom. She is deliberate and purposeful with changes; she explains the changes that are occurring.
- Believes that students learn better when they are “relaxed” and having fun; when the lesson is “meaningful.”
- Introduces surprises and new activities sometimes in the classroom to keep students interested.
- Brings in / expands on content whenever it seems appropriate (uses a thematic or content-based approach).

Teacher #2 (white shirt, yellow chart behind her):

- Uses Guided Language Acquisition Design (GLAD) strategies, especially with her lower level language learners.
- Works to increase interactivity and use of target language, encourages speaking and production, and provides visual support.
- Uses lots of songs and chants to improve language retention.
- Ties language learning to specific content areas.

For more on GLAD, see their Web site:

Project GLAD

<http://www.projectglad.com/glad.html>

Teacher #3 (pink sweater, chalkboard behind her):

- Keeps students actively engaged.
- Creates opportunities for students to learn from each other.
- Provides regular opportunities for group work because students like it.
- Remains flexible in her lessons; makes changes on the spot as needed.
- Gives students choices (control over their own learning) and lets them make decisions about their own learning; keeps learning at the center of all activities.

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Part C

This will vary on an individual basis.

Part D

Some of the comments from other teachers in the video with regard to their hopes (wishes), dreams, and plans for the future include:

Teacher #1 (long-sleeved blouse, pink bulletin board behind her):

- “Reflecting is always a good thing...” This is clearly a practice she engages in regularly.
- She would like to give students more opportunities for “exposure” to the real world, or the “outside world,” to make the language learning as contextualized and meaningful as possible.

Teacher #2 (red shirt, mural painting behind her):

- She is going to try to “have more conversations” and to put more emphasis on “communication” in English in her classes.
- She wishes in the future she could have her own classroom instead of moving from class to class, so that she could have English all over the walls and class for greater language exposure.
- She loves her work and the students she works with, and expects that this will continue.

Teacher #3 (white blouse, green wall and plant in background):

- She anticipates that the demand for English will continue to increase, especially in developing countries. Her school will continue to support English language instruction in the curriculum.
- She is planning to re-use a lesson she has taught before, using authentic materials from newspaper ads.
- She wants to create opportunities for students to improve their language skills and get good jobs.
- For herself, she plans to continue teaching for now and she enjoys it, but perhaps someday would like to move into an administrative role (in the Ministry of Education).
- She would like to reinstate student exchanges overseas.

Teacher #4 (blue dress, student posters behind her; same person as in Part B, teacher #1):

- Wishes students could learn to be brave and seek out new knowledge on their own.
- Hopes students will learn to get better at asking for help.

Summary Discussion

The readings include additional reflective practices such as:

- Teaching portfolios.
- Video or audio recordings of lessons, with follow-up analysis.
- Mentoring partnerships between new and more experienced teachers.
- Reflective practice as an integral part of formative peer observation.
- Classroom assessment techniques in which teachers actively gather feedback (some of it anonymous) from students to help shape the curriculum, lessons, and teaching practices.