



How Do I

ENCOURAGE REFLECTION?

Active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in light of the grounds which support it, and the further conclusions to which it tends, constitutes reflective thought.

—John Dewey, *How We Think*

Experienced teachers are familiar with the rhythms of the school day: the quick pace, the multiple interruptions, the moments of crisis. Their substantial experience informs their decisions about teaching and their sense of how well their students are learning. To the untrained eye, these teachers make teaching look effortless, even easy. They expertly weave activities together in an intricately patterned tapestry that seems to take shape by itself.

Beginning teachers have also had extensive experience of school. We often forget that as students, they observed thousands of hours of teaching and learned much about school cultures and structures—the beginning and end of school days and years, school functions, dances, sporting events, and graduations. Most have subsequently spent a year or more studying schools and teaching in university methods courses.

Unlike veteran teachers, however, beginning teachers have had scant experience working as the sole responsible professional in a classroom and limited knowledge of the demands placed on teachers: they haven't called parents, taken attendance, or kept a grade book. They

haven't participated in faculty meetings, refereed classroom arguments, negotiated or designed curriculum, or planned daily instruction. After a month in her fourth-grade classroom, Sulema, a first-year teacher, felt a little desperate: "I wasn't ready for the demands," she told her mentor, Hillary. "I mean, the students are great, but the responsibility for keeping everything in order is, well, sometimes it's overwhelming."

Beginning teachers like Sulema have much to contribute to the lives of their students. They bring an abundance of energy and a fresh perspective to teaching. But as the challenges and demands increase over the course of the school year, many beginning teachers find that they need strategies to help them reflect on and make sense of what happens in their classroom.

☞ . Why Reflection? . ☞

Reflection is essential to a fully lived professional life. Among teachers, the finest are those who consider their progress in the classroom, who ponder effective teaching strategies and devise creative classroom activities, who practice reflection to set personal and professional goals, who think on their feet as they teach. These educators are the exemplars and leaders and mentors in our schools.

Unlike their seasoned mentors, beginning teachers such as Sulema often feel barely a day or an hour ahead in their lesson planning. Although they have completed student teaching or an extended practicum, these new teachers simply aren't used to the complexities of teaching—which often explains why the initial weeks in the classroom seem overwhelming. As newcomers to the profession, they often spend all their free time preparing for the next day's teaching. Activities and a focused plan ensure that there will at least be classroom activity.

Systematic reflection, however, can significantly enrich a novice teacher's understanding. Especially at the beginning of their careers, new teachers need to step back and look at their classroom practices. Reflection

- Helps beginning teachers organize their thoughts and make sense of classroom events.
- Leads to professional forms of inquiry and goal setting.
- Promotes a model of learning that views teaching as an ongoing process of knowledge building.
- Promotes conversation and collaboration with mentors.

Mentoring offers experienced teachers an important opportunity to cultivate in their younger colleagues a critical disposition that will guide their reflective practices. New teachers feel under pressure to plan and organize classroom instruction even as they are managing each day's emotional and cognitive challenges. For those who, like Sarah, have not completed a student teaching experience and who are starting teaching with a temporary credential, the challenges may be more substantial. In her journal, which she shared with Candice, her mentor, she wrote,

This week I had two teachers' meetings after school, then I planned for the unit I'm team teaching . . . One night this week I was up until 2:00 in the morning completing report cards . . . I also go to State and take classes at night to complete my credential . . . I'm all for reflecting in my journal, but what I want to know is, no offense, but am I wasting my time writing to you in this journal?

Sarah's question about "wasting" time is legitimate: she is busy. But she needs to know that writing in her journal is one way to develop her knowledge and her skills. This is where Candice, her mentor, can be helpful. Mentors can talk with beginning teachers about why reserving time from a busy professional life to consider and reconsider their teaching can enhance their classroom practice. But it is equally important that mentors also support beginning teachers in their attempts to be reflective.

Reflection as a Sense-Making Process

Reflection is a critical function of successful teaching and learning, whatever an individual's experience or level of education. Reflection can be defined as an analytical process of data-gathering and sense-making through which teachers deepen their understanding of teaching and learning. Nearly a hundred years ago, the philosopher John Dewey (1910) wrote about the importance of reflective thinking. He characterized it as a sense-making process arising from a "felt need," usually in the form of an open-ended question about pedagogy or student learning. The reflective process continued with an active investigation directed toward bringing to light further facts to corroborate or to nullify the suggested belief (9). In the classroom, teasing apart a perplexing situation or problem and seeking a solution or an explanation guides and propels reflective inquiry.

As a mentor working with a beginning teacher, you can be an important catalyst for reflection. You are, after all, a presence in the new teacher's life whose suggestions carry

influence; your actions and reactions will shape your colleague's behavior and perspective. An excellent way to promote reflection is to demonstrate your own reflective processes and actions and their benefits, possibly by having the beginning teacher observe you or other team mentors periodically throughout the school year. School districts that sponsor mentoring programs often provide release time for beginning colleagues to observe their mentors and other master teachers in action.

Besides demonstrating reflective behavior and activities, you can also promote reflection in beginning teachers by documenting their teaching performance in the classroom. Your well-trained eyes watching and keeping track of classroom action can gather invaluable information. Having a way to describe reflective action to the beginning teacher will also help you to promote reflective thinking.

Types of Reflection

Donald Schön's (1983) *The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action* describes reflection as a necessary means for engaging in professional activity. By studying professionals and their apprentices as they solved "design problems," he developed categories of reflective thinking, two of which we discuss below.

Reflection-on-Action. Reflection-on-action involves a systematic analysis of professional activity or performance after a task is completed.

Ronaldo, a first-year language arts teacher working in a diverse, urban school, began the year planning and constructing all his lessons from scratch for his classes of more than thirty-five students. After a few weeks, however, he became disenchanted with his students' unacceptable behavior and low productivity. He articulated a "felt need" and began to talk with several of his colleagues about his teaching. Sensing a need to reconsider his teaching strategies, Ronaldo turned to his mentor, David, for assistance.

David scheduled time with Ronaldo to discuss the perceived "problem" at length. After listening to him carefully and discovering that he was a prolific writer, David recommended that he try to make sense of his students' behavior by writing as a way of thinking about it. Ronaldo began, and a week later he wrote in his journal:

During the first four weeks of instruction, I made the classic mistake of getting caught up in the curriculum. In an attempt to manage my 180 students, I dove head-

first into the pool of language arts, and to my surprise, my students dove right in after me. What I noticed was the blank stare in my students' eyes; they had absolutely no idea why they were swimming. It took me a while to realize that the reason I left school each day with a pounding headache was because I was doing way too much of the thinking. I was not only thinking for myself, but I was doing most of the thinking for my students. As a result of this epiphany, I now need to make independent thinking the primary issue inside our classroom.

This is an example of what Schön calls reflection-on-action: Ronaldo systematically documented and analyzed his teaching. His narrative helped him to work through what had happened in his classroom and to determine what he wanted to have happen. Eventually, Ronaldo's reflective writing produced an important insight about how to structure classroom activity. The solution included shifting responsibility for thinking to the students.

Reflection-in-Action. Unlike reflection that is planned, organized, and systematic in nature, reflection-in-action occurs in the midst of an activity and often results in the immediate reframing of a classroom situation or action. Reframing is the result of a sudden and unexpected flash of knowledge or understanding that enables a teacher to think and act differently and more productively. During one of her first lessons, Jasmine, a beginning elementary school teacher, issued oral directions to her students about completing a math problem in groups. As she scanned the room, however, she sensed their confusion. Some sat idly; others looked at each other blankly wondering how to proceed. She quickly reformulated the directions, wrote them on the chalkboard, and modeled the problem-solving process for all to see. Given clear directions and a sense of process, students began to work on their task. This is reflection-in-action: Jasmine relied on tacit knowledge to reframe the problem and then gave the directions in written and oral form so that students with different learning styles could understand the task.

🐟 · Activities That Promote Reflection · 🐟

The strategies that follow will enable you and the beginning teacher to collect information and document classroom procedures and to look at classroom culture and dynamics more carefully. They will also be useful in organizing this information so that you can offer structured feedback.

Over the years, we have tested and refined these activities and strategies, and we continue to use them with both beginning and veteran teachers. You can decide which work best in your own mentoring interactions.

Reflective Dialogues

A mentor teacher's most important tool in promoting reflection-on-action with the beginning teacher is dialogue. We rarely think of dialogue as a tool, yet talking about teaching can be a very effective way to deepen our understanding of classroom practice. Nothing is more important than setting aside time to talk with new colleagues about what is happening in their classrooms. Often a quick "How is it going?" is enough. They may be seeing their classrooms with fresh, enthusiastic eyes, but some of what they observe may confuse, mislead, or alarm them. Frequent conversations with a mentor will reassure them and give them the added benefit of a longer view that sees beyond current problems. Simply listening sometimes encourages a new colleague to talk her way through to a solution or to discover a different approach. Informal conversations like these can often do more to promote reflective thinking and inquiry than any amount of coursework.

Strategies to encourage reflective dialogue:

- Allocate time for one-on-one or group dialogue.
- Keep conversations confidential, since trust is essential.
- Listen and observe. Resist the urge to take over the conversation.
- Share recollections of your own early days in teaching, but be careful not to overwhelm your new colleague with too many "horror" stories.
- Use the information you gather during your class observations to generate talking points for substantive discussion. ("Are you dominating the class? How can you encourage students to take responsibility for classwide projects?")

Observing and Scripting Classroom Activity

Mentors may feel they need to observe a beginning teacher's classroom practice before they talk together about it, that simply asking, "How is it going?" will not engender a thoughtful exchange. Classroom observations are useful ways to launch a reflective dialogue. One way to document what you observe is to "script" a lesson or a series of lessons. "Scripting" involves describing and recording the student and teacher interactions, materials—pens, paper, texts, overheads, videotapes—and activities you observe in the classroom context. You can script by taking notes or by recording observations with the formats discussed in this chapter.

Documentation is often considered a task unique to administrators, who are responsible for formal evaluations of teaching performance, but even beginning teachers benefit from scripting, or recording, what their mentors or other colleagues say and do when they teach.

Since beginning teachers are usually nervous about their classroom performance, time spent observing exemplary, but not necessarily perfect, practice may ease their anxiety and provide subjects for thoughtful postlesson conversations—how, for example, veteran teachers organize their class and its activities, follow the curriculum, and manage student behavior.

Three months had passed since the beginning of the school year, yet Sarah, a beginning fourth-grade teacher, was nervous about Bobbie, her mentor, observing her teaching. Before visiting Sarah's classroom, Bobbie talked to Sarah about the observation and made it clear that the mentor's role was to support and guide—not to "evaluate." Bobbie wanted Sarah to know that the observations would lead to understanding, and, it was hoped, improved teaching.

Bobbie and Sarah met a day prior to observation to discuss the visitation. Bobbie and Sarah agreed that during the first few observations, Bobbie would focus on one aspect of teaching and that she would observe without scripting. So during the first classroom visit, Bobbie sat inconspicuously in the room and made mental notes, focusing on the opening of the class. She and Sarah worked on engaging openings to lessons that would get students quickly working and learning.

After the class, Bobbie talked briefly with Sarah about the observation and the opening of class. Bobbie understood that immediate feedback was essential to promoting thinking and learning, and she wanted to motivate Sarah to reflect on the class opening and to learn from it. Bobbie left suggesting that in their regularly scheduled meeting, they talk further about the class opening and discuss various scripting formats Bobbie would be using in the future.

After the initial observation, any of the following activities may prove helpful to the reflective exchanges of mentors and beginning teachers.

Noting General Impressions

One way to document classroom action is simply to note your general impressions. Locate an inconspicuous place in the classroom with a clear view of the students and the teacher and write down whatever comes to mind as you watch classroom activities unfold. You will probably end up with a page or two of notes or a list of thoughts about general classroom events.

Strategies to enhance this activity:

- Beforehand, explain to your new colleague what you will be writing down and why; do not keep your intent secret.
- Focus your observation on one or two events, questions, or issues.
- Do not overload your colleague with random observations about what he or she is doing “wrong”; balance your comments with positive statements about student and teacher performance.
- Talk with the beginning teacher shortly after the observation.

Chunking Classroom Activities

Managing time is often a challenge for beginning teachers. This exercise requires an observer to look with a “researcher’s eyes”: every five minutes, write down on a sheet of paper what the students and the teacher are doing (see Figure 5.1). We refer to this activity as “chunking” because it considers those classroom activities that occur during particular chunks of time; taken together these blocks make up the span of class time.

Teachers and students may, of course, devote more than five minutes to an activity. The purpose of chunking, however, isn’t to encourage rapid-fire changes in classroom activities but to assist in developing a sense for sequence, pacing, and structure.

Strategies to enhance this activity:

- Wear a watch, or place one in view, so that you do not have to look at the wall clock, which may be located in an inconvenient place.
- On the right side of the paper, record observations that pertain to the chunk recorded on the left.
- Offer feedback shortly after the observation.

Analyzing Social Organization and Teaching Activities

Many beginning teachers need help in considering which organizational structure best promotes student learning in their classrooms. Sometimes, for example, a mini-lecture or direct instruction will clarify key concepts; at other times, sharing and learning in pairs or in small groups are more effective.

How a teacher organizes activities depends on several variables: the nature of the task or the material, the social and intellectual capabilities of the students, and the teacher’s

Figure 5.1 Chunking Classroom Interactions

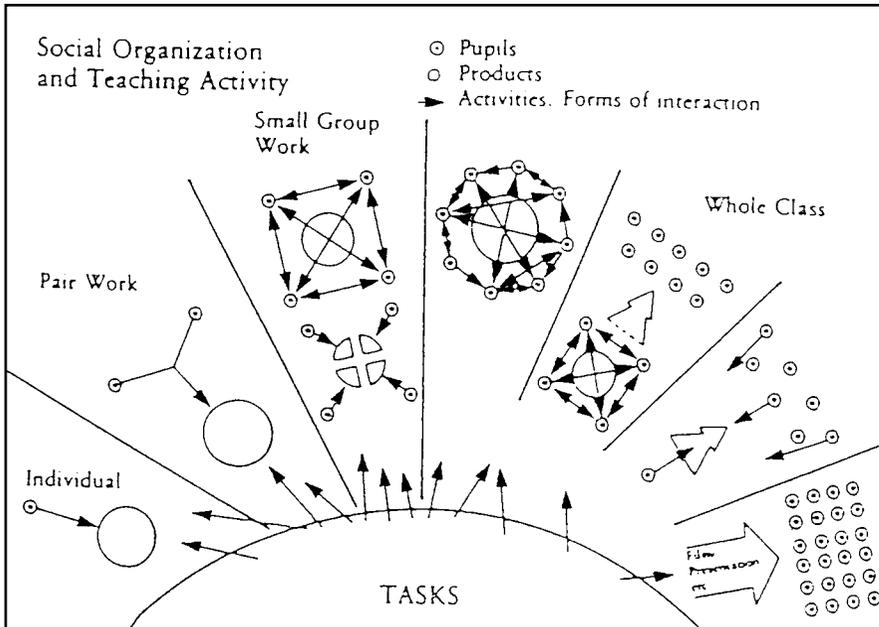
Time	Teacher/Student Activity	Observation
05		
10		
15		
20		
25		
30		
35		
40		
45		
50		
55		
60		
65		
70		
75		

personality. By analyzing the various structures, you can help the beginning teacher to consider these variables and to select the most effective.

Begin this exercise by documenting the types of organizational structures the teacher has used in a lesson (see Figure 5.2) and keep track of the amount of instructional time devoted to them.

Strategies to enhance this activity:

- Consider the content of the lesson and its relation to the organizational structure.
- Document the percentage of the lesson informed by the various organizational structures detailed in Figure 5.2.
- Present your information in the form of statistics rather than opinions; use the data to spark conversation, not to tender judgment.

Figure 5.2 Social Organization and Teacher Activity (From Nunan 1990, 78)

Charting Discussions and Questioning Techniques

Teachers often initiate a classroom discussion to promote students' sense of involvement and understanding. Research suggests that effective strategies for discussion can enhance student learning (Christenbury 2006; Marshall, Smagorinsky, and Smith 1995). Since discussion is such a powerful tool for learning, and much of what we do in classrooms involves talk, you might suggest to the beginning teacher that she think about how often she asks questions and what kind (yes/no, pseudo, vague, open-ended), and about the responses students offer. You and the teacher can both document these questions and responses using the coding system and format analysis developed by David Nunan (1990). This information offers a good starting point for conversation about questioning techniques that promote interaction, encourage critical thinking, and sustain intellectual development.

Strategies to enhance this activity:

- Using the adaptation of Nunan's coding system shown in Figure 5.3, note the types of teachers' questions and responses.

Figure 5.3 Analyzing Classroom Interactions/Questions (Adapted from Nunan 1990, 82)

Class _____	Date _____
Teacher _____	
Interactions	Tallies Total
1. Teacher asks a “pseudo”-question (a question to which she already knows the answer).	
2. Teacher asks an open-ended question (a question to which she does not know the answer).	
3. Teacher rephrases or recasts a question.	
4. Teacher probes response of learner.	
5. Teacher explains a vocabulary item.	
6. Teacher praises.	
7. Teacher answers her own question.	
8. Teacher explains a point relating to the content of the lesson.	
9. Teacher gives directions.	
10. Teacher criticizes.	
11. Learner asks a question.	
12. Learner responds/answers a question.	
13. Learner talks to another learner after a question.	
14. Period of silence or confusion.	
15. Other	

- Initially, code classroom discourse and formats without discussing the coding system or its purpose with the beginning teacher; you want the information you gather to be organic and uninfluenced by the observation tool.
- Encourage beginning teachers to visit other classrooms to observe and document class discussions. Play back videotapes of beginning teachers presenting a lesson and encourage them to use the coding system to analyze their style and habits in classroom discourse.
- Talk about the information gathered in the coding system shortly after the observation.

Mapping Classroom Landscapes

How a teacher arranges desks and learning space often reveals how she views and uses classroom areas. By gathering information about classroom layout (“mapping”), you can initiate a conversation about ways of arranging the classroom to increase student learning and interaction. In this exercise, the observer takes a visual inventory of the room’s physical features. Where are students’ desks? (Are they arranged in clusters? In a horseshoe? In rows? As chairs at tables?) Where is the teacher’s desk? (At the front of the room? On the side?) Where does the teacher stand? Is there a class library, and if so, where is it located? Where do the bulletin boards hang, and how are they designed? (Is student work displayed? If so, how?) Mapping the classroom landscape like this focuses new teachers on the relationship between physical arrangements and student learning.

Strategies to enhance this activity:

- Use a full sheet of paper and draw the room, with desks; tables; chalk-, dry erase, or bulletin boards; and so forth. Capture it all.
- Sketch in the position of the desks or tables in the room; indicate where each student sits and the gender of each.
- Using this map as a reference, talk about the classroom environment and how its arrangement fosters—or inhibits—interaction and learning.

Charting Classroom Movement

Another excellent way to collect information is to chart the teacher’s physical position in the classroom. Beginning teachers often mark out “power zones” in the front of the room and tend to avoid sections where particular groups of students sit. But as teachers, they need to be aware of their own movement and tendencies and of the activities in every part of the room. It is good practice for beginning teachers to circulate throughout the classroom and to monitor student activities.

Strategies to enhance this activity:

- Draw a map of the classroom that includes the location of students’ desks or tables/chairs, the teacher’s desk, and the front and back of the room.
- Section the room off into quarters and chart the behavior you see in each section, noting emerging patterns.
- Once you have drawn the map, trace the teacher’s movement with a pencil, following it closely.

Writing to Reflect on Teaching

Journal. Writing in a journal is an effective way to reflect on classroom occurrences, events, conflicts, successes, and disappointments. By documenting and analyzing their experiences in a journal, beginning teachers learn to reflect-on-action. In their journal entries, they can capture and then critique what is working well and what is working poorly. Journals can also provide an important outlet for new teachers, who at the end of the day or the week need a place to unload and express their feelings.

Keeping a journal requires little in terms of materials. Any writing medium will do. Some like pen and notebook, others prefer computers. Regardless of the medium or the technology, the point of keeping a journal is to use writing to reflect on classroom practice and attempt to make sense of it. Here, mentor teachers can assist beginning teachers by writing themselves.

Although the act of writing down thoughts, ideas, and feelings is important, ideally the journal should lead to thoughtful conversations. Too often, educators require their students to keep journals but do not integrate this writing into purposeful classroom activities. The ideas remain on the margins instead of finding expression in new approaches and activities.

Ask questions that will guide the beginning teacher to writing, analysis, and critique: “How did you feel about today’s lesson and how it unfolded?” A simple question may lead to a journal entry. Questions that focus on a specific issue or event, such as a mini-lesson or a small-group activity, might also encourage more thoughtful teaching.

When Bill began teaching, he assumed that every student in his tenth-grade class could read the stories and essays in the assigned textbook. Working in an inner-city school in Los Angeles, he quickly discovered, however, that many of his students couldn’t decode or comprehend the textbook. Bill turned to his mentor, Estelle, a veteran teacher of eight years. She recommended that he reflect on what he was observing in a journal. Determined to do something about the situation, Bill began one journal entry with two guiding questions: “How many students in my classes can decode and comprehend the text?” and “Is the textbook too difficult for some of my students?” Bill wrote several pages on his observations about the challenges facing students reading below “grade level.” Using what he had discovered from check tests and individual reading inventories, in another journal entry he concluded, “My students had difficulty decoding and comprehending even the simplest sentences in the text. What made matters worse was that the success of the unit depended on their ability to comprehend what they had read.”

As Dewey (1910) noted, there must be a “felt need” to question before reflection or inquiry can happen. This does not necessarily mean that the questions have to be anchored in a classroom catastrophe. Beginning teachers often spotlight only unproductive activity: their inability to keep students engaged or on task; the lack of enough material or activities to fill the class period; the student who simply refuses to work or who is completely belligerent; or, as in Bill’s case, students’ inability to read. There is no denying that these are significant challenges, well worth consideration and reflection. Yet classroom teachers will always face challenges. The challenging aspects of teaching are usually balanced by successful practices or breakthroughs, and mentors should assist their new colleagues by focusing on what is working well. By looking at successful activities, beginning teachers can identify characteristics they can replicate in other areas of their classroom practice.

Strategies to enhance this activity:

- Use the journal as a place for dialogue. Read and respond to the new teacher’s journal entries. You might consider trading off writing in the journal week by week or dividing each page down the middle and allocating one side to the new teacher’s reactions and thoughts and the other to your comments and additional reactions.
- Encourage your new colleague to select one event or one episode and in the journal to develop it into a position statement, a point of departure for other classroom strategies or curriculum and assessment materials.
- Talk about the journal entries. Sometimes a simple ten- or fifteen-minute conversation can lead to wonderful insights and a more sophisticated understanding of students, of learning, and of the art of teaching.

Critical Incidents in One-Pagers. For those who think writing should be a tool for reflection but want an alternative to the journal, we suggest the “one-pager.” A one-pager is a single page of writing whose purpose is to promote reflective thinking and dialogue. The limited amount of space forces the beginning teacher to focus his thinking about teaching by analyzing one or two observations or a critical incident.

To promote reflective analysis you might suggest dividing the one-pager into two parts. In the first part, the beginning teacher describes, in some detail, the event or happening; in the second, she can try to analyze the event and her thoughts and feelings about it (Tremmel 1993). Here, for example, Monica, a beginning sixth-grade teacher, reflects on a critical incident.

Part I (Description)

My principal gave each of us a packet of information for beginning teachers. Among the helpful hints was one which said, "Greet students by name at the door at the beginning of each class period." I decided to observe other teachers in my area and their classroom learning climates.

One teacher worked at her desk and did not speak to any student until after the second bell. Then she looked up and scowled . . . the students began working on the task, but they also talked to friends, sharpened pencils, passed notes, etc.

The second teacher stood at the door and greeted each student by name and involved the students in casual conversations about their interests or school activities. When I asked her about her rationale, she said, "I want students to know that I am glad to see them and that I am ready to work with them and not against them. You wouldn't invite someone to your home and ignore them until dinner was served, would you?"

Part II (Response to the Incident)

I never realized that the time between bells is an important time to interact with students and that it sets the tone for the class period. The second teacher's students seem to respect her because she respects them. I liked the analogy of welcoming the students into the classroom as being similar to greeting dinner guests . . . From this experience, I plan to greet and welcome my students into the classroom every day.

Strategies to enhance this activity:

- Respond to the one-pager with a one-pager of your own.
- Model and share your reflective processes in a one-pager.
- Talk about what you have both written.

Documenting and Analyzing with Video

Toni, a beginning teacher, stood at the front of the classroom in her "power zone" with her arms crossed. She rarely smiled or communicated her delight in teaching to her students. Yet after receiving feedback from Allison, her mentor teacher, she was surprised. She could not believe what she heard and took the reaction as a personal insult—until Allison asked her to videotape two of her lessons.

Toni took Allison's advice and videotaped several lessons in her ninth-grade language arts classes. Then she viewed the two lessons with her daughters; their honest responses provided Toni with important insights, as she explained to Allison shortly after she viewed the tapes: "I didn't want to believe what you were telling me. I mean I heard what you were saying, but I had no idea; I mean, I didn't think about what I was doing and how I looked. But then one of my daughters, who watched the tape at home, commented that I was boring. Can you imagine—boring! Hearing that from her and seeing it on the tape really hit home."

Capturing teaching on video gives beginning teachers like Toni a way of stepping back and gaining important distance. Often a mentor teacher notes a particular mannerism or procedure, but her comments fall on deaf ears. Any adverse reaction can seem like criticism, which puts a new teacher on the defensive. It could be that new teachers haven't developed the reflective capabilities that would let them see their teaching performance objectively. Videotapes provide distance and perspective. Newcomers may apply insights from videotapes immediately, as Toni did, or they can look back at earlier tapes to assess their improvement over time.

This is not to say that the video camera will not capture outstanding performances. It will! And these special moments of outstanding teaching should be highlighted and celebrated. New teachers view their classroom performance as pathologists: they hunt for what is wrong or broken, for activities that have failed or flopped. New teachers can learn from their failures, of course, but they can also learn from their successes.

Strategies to enhance this activity:

- Encourage videotaping of several classes two or three times during the semester or the academic year; a running record is important.
- Position the camera in different locations for each taping: in front, facing the students; in back, looking toward the front.
- If possible, arrange to have the video camera in the room a day or two before filming to give students time to get used to its presence.
- Check district or school policies about videotaping in the classroom.

. Reflection Promotes Professionalism .

The ability to draw back and reflect on your actions allows you to manage and make sense of the flood of images, feelings, and expectations you experience in the classroom. As a

mentor, you can assist beginning teachers to deepen their understanding of classroom activity through thoughtful reflection and conversation. The information you gather during your classroom observations and follow-up dialogues with newcomers can help them set new goals for professional development.

To promote and encourage interaction and reflection, individual schools and school districts must allocate sufficient time for mentor programs so that veterans and beginners can work together. Conversation at a workshop or during lunch isn't enough. If they are to undertake a substantive review of their practice, beginning teachers need sustained periods of time during and after the school day to consider their teaching and their students' progress.

Allocating enough time to mentors is also essential. Mentors are generally busy classroom professionals whose schedules are as frenetic and full as the beginning teacher's. They should not have to "find time" during the day or after school to observe or talk with new colleagues. For mentors to be successful, they need ample time to work with beginning professionals in developing their teaching practice.

🐟 · Summary · 🐟

Reflective practitioners can continually improve their teaching performance by being more aware of ways to apply effective instructional strategies, engender positive student response, and set and attain personal and professional goals.

According to Schön (1983), reflection can take the form of reflection-on-action (reflecting on successes and concerns after the class period) and/or reflection-in-action (reflecting during teaching to make immediate changes to aid student learning).

Mentors can help beginning teachers by modeling reflection and by observing each other's classrooms. Various methods of documenting classroom activities include scripting teacher talk, noting general impressions, chunking activities, analyzing social organization and teaching activities, charting discussions and questioning techniques, mapping the classroom, charting teacher movement, journaling, and analyzing classroom videos. By documenting and analyzing classroom interactions, mentors and beginning teachers can reflect together on learning successes and problems.

Using reflection, both new and experienced teachers can examine *what* happened in the classroom as well as *why* it happened, thereby increasing teacher professionalism and maturity.

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