

Domain IV Reflection

Hannah Schafer

At the root of every advance in pedagogical science is a thoughtful reflection. Had researchers not taken the time to question current best practices, we would not have boundary-pushing frameworks, like abolitionist teaching and historically responsive literacy. Both novel models for inclusive education were born out of the analysis of American education's strengths and weaknesses. And both provide educators with strategies for questioning their own practices in educating Black and Brown children (Dunn et. al. 2021).

It is inarguable that reflection is the critical, final step in the planning process. Yet, it is often treated as expendable and rarely gets the intentionality a high-quality reflection warrants. In *Pedagogical Reflection: Demonstrating the Value of Introspection*, Virtue argues that one's reflection routine is highly personal; therefore, it is difficult to make universal (2021, p.137). For some, reflection is lofty and intellectual, and for others it is directed and methodical. Reflection has not been a consistent part of my planning and teaching routine, so I don't know exactly which methods will work best for me.

Not only is reflection vital for pedagogical growth, but it is also important for student growth. That is why many STE(A)M and problem-based learning certifications include the requirement for student journals be integrated into the curriculum. It is no doubt a beneficial practice for students and their teachers, which is why I strive to prioritize reflection as a professional development strategy in the coming school year.

Beyond reflection, I aim to remain abreast of teaching best practices after I graduate from my teacher preparation program. I pride myself on being a lifelong learner, so I expect to continue delving into pedagogical literature as it is published. Similarly, I wish to challenge myself to research conferences and other learning opportunities to address my areas for growth. Many schools are willing to sponsor a teachers' attendance to one of these events, and I would like to take advantage of that throughout my teaching career.

Finally, I want to position myself to be able to teach other teachers. When I offered a professional development session about classroom websites and OneNote, I found myself deeply enjoying the experience of planning and executing the learning opportunity geared towards adults. As I continue to deepen my understanding of various elements of curriculum, pedagogy, technology, and adolescent development, I see myself venturing into teacher professional development. Many educators groan at the thought of professional development, which is why I see it as a worthwhile challenge to create content that is worth a teacher's precious planning time.

It is a teacher's professional responsibility to hone their craft. This can only be done when they are finely attuned to their strengths, weaknesses, and goals. Reflection and the pursuit of opportunities for growth become paramount to defy the boundaries of one's professional capabilities.

References

Dunn, D. C., Chisholm, A., Spaulding, E., & Love, B. L. (2021). A Radical Doctrine: Abolitionist Education in Hard Times. *Educational Studies: Journal of the American Educational Studies Association*, *57*(3), 211–223.

Virtue, E. E. (2021). Pedagogical Reflection: Demonstrating the Value of Introspection. *Journal of Effective Teaching in Higher Education*, *4*(1), 128–142.