

## Reflection and Self-Evaluation

**Introduction** As you are aware by now, **REFLECTION** is an integral component of the Teacher Education Program at Weber State University and is critical to your becoming and being a professional teacher. It is important that you develop your ability to take objective, critical, and detailed examination of your self, your teaching, and your students.

**Reflection in Level 2** In level 1, you were introduced to the general notion of reflective thinking and journal writing; much of which will still be very applicable in Level 2. For example, remember that reflections are NOT summaries of your notes or unrelated series of observations. General statements, such as "I enjoyed that reading," "I learned a lot," or "I liked how the teacher worked with the children," are not adequate nor appropriate reflections. Reflective thinking means describing analytically what it was that was "enjoyed," "learned," or "liked," and then elaborating on why. Effective reflections are illustrated in the following typology (Spaulding & Wilson, 2002):

| Type of Reflection      | Definition of Reflection  | Illustrative Journal Excerpt  |
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| Reflection in/on action | One's own personal teaching performance   | More than anything else ... [students' evaluation of <i>Macbeth</i> teaching unit] helped me realize that I have a long way to go as a teacher. First of all, I learned that I must plan ahead and be better prepared. Although I had lesson plans every day, I wasn't always prepared with handouts and rubrics. Once or twice, I had planned to make copies when I arrived at the school. When I got to school, however, the copier was already used or it was out of order. (Ella's Journal, 11/8/99)  |
| Deliberative            | A whole range of teaching problems, including students, the curriculum, instructional strategies, the rules and the organization of the classroom | Technology along with savvy textbook materials certainly has facilitated the English teacher's desire to contextualize literature for students. Mrs. Z used the laser disk that came with the textbook she uses to show students American Romantic artwork. She opened class with a mini-lesson on how to analyze art and then she reviewed the characteristics of Romantic literature. From there, she turned on her TV and used her remote control to show different pieces of artwork. Students were able to transfer the characteristics they learned about literature to the artwork they were viewing. Mrs. Z was adhering to Maxine Greene's views that "the symbol systems we associate with several arts ought to be included in attempts to make meaning." However, upon reflection, there was little room for divergent meanings for constructed knowledge.... The activity served merely to reinforce the themes ... that were already taught to the students. (Kate's Journal, 11/26/99) |
| Personalistic           | One's own personal growth and relationships with students   | I spent my time this week in the ninth grade school. It seems quite strange to have one grade level so completely separated from everyone else. I started thinking about how it would be to go through this process. One of my best friends in seventh grade was an eighth grader by name of Jason "Jake" Leeper.... He was my best friend in high school. But if ninth grade school would have been separated like it is here ... I don't think Jake and I would have been friends ... it seems like it would be hard [for ninth graders] to meet people in the upper grades ... At least, this is my opinion. (Grant's Journal, 9/9/99)   |

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| Critical | The social, moral, and political dimensions of schooling | I am very patriotic and feel proud to stand for my flag ... but I disagree with the principal's action.... What message does it send to young students learning about our liberties, when they are forced to stand for the flag? (Maurice's Journal, 9/24/99) |
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Reflections in Level 2 will primarily center on the lessons you will teach during the field work (though there will be other opportunities in your classes). A simple process to follow is as follows: after you have taught your lesson, sit down and write down comments, reactions, etc., on the lesson plan itself (marginal notes). Later, you should then write a more formal reflection for each lesson taught and respond to questions such as the following (adapted from Reed & Bergemann, 2005):

- How did the characteristics of the students affect your lesson plan? (Remember your contextual factors.)
- How did you utilize different performance modes (writing, speaking, reading, doing experiments, solving puzzles)? Why?
- Why did you select the particular teaching assessment strategies you incorporated in your lesson?
- Evaluate the assessment strategies you used in your lesson.

**Reflecting on Field Work**

- How did the students respond to your enforcement of rules and application of consequences?
- How successful was your lesson? What was most effective? Least effective?
- What did *you learn from planning* your lesson? What did *you learn from teaching* the lesson?
- What did you learn about the teaching strategies you used?
- How did you adjust your instruction as a result of student learning?
- How well ALIGNED were your content **objectives** with your formative **assessment** and instructional **activities**? Your Unit Goal with your Summative Assessment?

**Summary** Reflection is important IF we are to become effective teachers. We need to examine continuously our planning, thinking, assessing, teaching, etc., to ensure that ALL the students in your classroom are learning and can provide evidence of that learning.

**References** Reed, A.J.S., & Bergemann, V.E. (2005). *A guide to observation, participation, and reflection in the classroom*. Boston: McGraw Hill.  
Spaulding, E., & Wilson, A. (2002, Oct). Demystifying reflection: A study of pedagogical strategies that encourage reflective journal writing. *Teachers College Record*, *104*(7), 1393-1421.

08-11-11