Strategies to Practise Reflectively

Before Teaching

Examine your own values, beliefs and attitudes to ensure they do not exclude students from participating. Ask yourself:

- Do I fall into the trap of expecting students will share my social, cultural and political perspectives?
- Do I make assumptions about students based on language competence, gender, appearance or membership of a particular group?
- Do I recognise that as an educator I may be perceived to be representative of a privileged member of society?

Reflect on the cultural views represented in your specific discipline area to evaluate how these might exclude students:

- Examine the cultural context of your discipline area. What is it? How would you explain it to students?
- How does your discipline/profession influence the way you teach?
- How do other worldviews frame your discipline? Create opportunities for students to share their perspective(s) of the discipline.

Reflect on your own learning experiences:

- Think about a positive learning situation with a teacher you thought was ‘good’. What made it a positive experience?
- What positive experiences, skills and attitudes do you bring into your teaching practice?
- What areas would you like to improve on?

“The most distinctive of these very good teachers is that their practice is the result of careful reflection... They themselves learn lessons each time they teach, evaluating what they do and using these self-critical evaluations to adjust what they do next time.”

Why Colleges Succeed, Ofsted:2004
www.mcgraw-hill.co.uk/openupchapters/9780335222407.pdf
During Teaching

Ensure your practice is transparent:
- Share your philosophy of teaching with your students. You can tell them:
  - what good teaching means to you
  - what effective learning means to you
  - your particular approach and influences in your teaching
  - your expectation of students
  - how you support students to achieve their potential
  - how you inspire learners
  - how you are open to improving your practice into the future.
- Communicate to students at the beginning of each semester your commitment to understanding your own assumptions, values and beliefs associated with diversity. This sends a message to students that you are committed to creating a learning environment where everyone is valued and respected.

After Teaching

Actively use strategies to support the development of reflection:
- After each teaching session reflect on:
  - What worked well? Why?
  - What could be improved? How can I do that?
- Try videoing your session. This can provide useful information on things you may do in sessions that you are not aware of or things happening in class that you do not normally see. Consider some of the following aspects:
  - How much do I talk?
  - Are the instructions and explanations I give clear?
  - How much time do I allow students to talk?
  - Where do I stand? Can I be seen clearly by all students? Do I move around or stay in one spot?
  - Do I speak to the whole group or focus on one particular area?
  - How do I come across to the students? (interested, happy, focussed)
- Keep a regular diary, journal, or blog of your teaching. This could be part of your Essentials teaching portfolio [www.rmit.edu.au/teaching/pcittp/essentials](http://www.rmit.edu.au/teaching/pcittp/essentials)
  This e-portfolio template provides you with a space for reflection; if you choose you may personalise it and add your own thoughts. It gives you an opportunity to reflect on your practice and create your own action plan.
- Set up peer observation and mentoring with colleagues: Peer Partnerships
- Regularly ask students for informal feedback on your teaching.
- Refer to student evaluation data