

# Teacher Reflection Framework: Engagement through Active Learning



ACTIVE LEARNING  
FOCUS



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## ABOUT THIS RESOURCE

Learning and growing as a teacher is not a linear path, but a dynamic and iterative process that requires reflection on actions and outcomes. Engaging in reflective practice allows you to identify strengths and areas for growth, so that you can develop your practice and adapt to changing contexts and student needs over time. Just as teachers want students to move forward in their learning, teachers need to move forward in their learning in order to grow as professionals.

### What is reflective practice?

Reflective practice is a cycle of inquiry that allows teachers to be the drivers of their own professional growth. Through a process of observation, analysis, interpretation, and evaluation, teachers reflect on their instructional practices in order to take steps to improve their practices and increase student learning and engagement.

Instead of a single exercise of self-assessment, reflective practice should be an ongoing and repeated process. While there are several models that illustrate this iterative process, this resource draws from Rolfe, Freshwater, & Jasper (2001). For further information on reflective practice, consider these resources from the [University College Dublin](#) and [Cambridge International Education](#).

### Why use a framework to reflect on teaching practices?

This framework for reflection scaffolds the cycle of inquiry and self-assessment, helping you organize your reflections and target areas for improvement.

Designed to be used repeatedly over time, the framework includes concrete examples of strategies and activities to help you plan for improvement. By documenting your reflections and plans this way, you are able to share them with colleagues or administration and collaborate on steps to move forward.

### How should I use this framework?

This framework is based on Rolfe, Freshwater, & Jasper's (2001) 'What' model, an iterative process consisting of three simple questions:

- [What?](#) Describe what happened (your actions and outcomes and student actions and outcomes).
- [So What?](#) Reflect on what this tells you about your instructional practices and your students' needs (what new insight do you have?).

- [Now What?](#) Describe a plan of action for improvement and how you will apply your new insight and reflection to new classroom experiences.

These three main questions are intentionally simple, making it easier to keep the inquiry and reflection process in mind as you teach and observe your students. The framework that follows expands on these questions, drilling down into specific actions, observations, and strategies as you reflect on what has happened, respond with comprehensive answers, and make plans for moving forward. Before you use the framework to engage in reflective practice, take a moment to review the reflective prompts for each question as well as the examples of active learning strategies included after the first step.

### **Why focus on active learning?**

Active learning increases student engagement. Students learn more when they “learn by doing.” Decades of research on active learning has produced a long list of positive outcomes. These benefits include:

- Increased motivation, interest, and creativity
- Increased resilience due to stronger peer relationships
- Improved student attitude and self-esteem
- Improved performance and retention, particularly for students from underrepresented groups
- Increased level of perceived control in their learning

## Reflection Framework: Engagement through Active Learning

How are you supporting active learning in the classroom?

<h3>What?</h3> <p>Descriptive</p>			
What were you doing?	What were students doing?	What active learning strategies did you plan for or include? What was your goal for this strategy? (Check out the list of <a href="#">examples</a> below this table.)	How do you know students were actively engaged in their learning? Describe engagement levels and student learning outcomes.
	[Describe student actions and experiences]		

### Examples of Active Learning Strategies and Specific Activities

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <a href="#">Student choice</a> through <a href="#">differentiated learning materials</a> (articles, texts, problem sets, etc.)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Collaboration or <a href="#">cooperative learning structures</a></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <a href="#">Physically active learning experiences</a> (kinesthetic). Teacher led modeling or demonstration with student involvement</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Guided practice or guided note-taking</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <a href="#">"Flipped" classroom</a></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Peer teaching or student experts</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Options for a formative assignment</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Options for summative projects and assignments</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Options for participation in activities during class</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Flexible pace or path</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Hands on activities, manipulatives, or maker space stations</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Intentional "brain-breaks"</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Activities to build relationships or classroom culture</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Projects or inquiry based learning</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Structured reflection (<a href="#">Windows and Mirrors</a>, etc.)</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Physically Active Learning Activities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Role Playing or <a href="#">Drama Based Instruction</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Four Corners</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Vocabulary Charades</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Give One, Get One</a></li> <li>• Forum Theatre</li> <li>• Tableau Vivant</li> </ul>	<p><b>Cooperative Learning Structures</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Think-Pair-Share</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Jigsaw</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Write Around</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Round Robin</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Tea Party</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Carousel</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Graffiti Board</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Roll the Dice</a></li> <li>• Socratic Seminar</li> <li>• Magic Hat</li> </ul>	<p><b>Differentiation of Learning Materials</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Concept Maps</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Cloze Reading</a></li> <li>• Animations/Videos</li> <li>• <a href="#">Screen Reader</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Chunking</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Multiple Modalities</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Audio Texts</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Active Reading Bookmark</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">QPR: Active Reading for Student Engagement</a></li> </ul>	<p><b>Strategies for Providing Choice</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Activity Menu</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Choice Board</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Tic-Tac-Toe</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Must Do-Should Do-Aspire to Do</a></li> <li>• Golden Line</li> <li>• <a href="#">Playlists and Progress Trackers</a></li> </ul>

## So What?

### Knowledge and Meaning

What do the students' level of engagement and the learning outcomes tell me about <b>my planning or instruction</b> ?	What do the students' level of engagement and the learning outcomes tell me about <b>my students</b> ?	Why did I do what I did? What was I trying to do? What did I base my actions off of?	What new insights or understanding do I have? What could I have done differently?

## Now What?

### Plan of Action

What do I need to do to improve? How can I apply my insight and reflection to new classroom experiences?

**Consider:** Do I need to incorporate new or different active learning strategies? Do I need to modify active learning practices I've already tried? How will I plan for and implement this?

Get more resources like this at [www.opportunityeducation.org/resources](http://www.opportunityeducation.org/resources)