

Reflective Teaching

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What is Reflection?

- Reflection is a metacognitive (awareness or analysis of one's own learning or thinking processes) strategy that helps teachers think critically upon their experiences, actions and decisions during their teaching practices.

Why do we need to reflect?

- Reflective practice helps teachers to have a deeper understanding of their own teaching styles, teaching beliefs and teaching identities.
- As you reflect, you will better understand your roles as teachers!

Reflective teaching

Reflective teaching means looking at what you do in the classroom and giving it a meaning by attaching the why question to what you go through.

- You also empower your students to ask these why questions to their classroom experiences.
- You start by recognizing that you and your students are key persons in learning environment.
- Your being in the classroom must make sense to you and your students.
- Your relived/recalled experiences as a teacher and those of your students are explored and evaluated to let you fulfill your mission and vision in the teaching profession.

Richards (1990) argues that reflective teaching is a move beyond the ordinary to a higher level of awareness of how teaching and take place. This demands that you and your students be involved in a process of self observation and self evaluation.

Thus, you and your students must gather information on your practice and experiences.

This information is organized, analysed and interpreted to identify what beliefs, assumptions and values are attached to your practices and experiences.

- You and your students end up recognising, examining and ruminating what you do as a teacher and students, respectively.
- We may envision what is happening in Figure 2. You and your students must place yourself at every step of the figure because what is happening is about you and your practice and experience.

Figure 2: Cyclic flow of reflective teaching

1. Collect data
2. Analyse data
3. Evaluate data
4. Reflect
5. Plan
6. Make decision
7. Act

Why reflective teaching?

- Reflective teaching informs you that you are in charge of your teaching/learning and that you have a major contribution to make towards its success.
- This is why your behaviour must not be taken for granted as it needs to be continuously evaluated to let your practice and experiences be meaningful.
- To you the teacher, reflective teaching is a deliberate move to allow you think critically of your teaching practice so that your students can maximize their learning.
- Thus, through a change oriented activity, you contribute highly to your professional development.
- Richards (1990) argues that experience alone is insufficient for professional growth, but experience coupled with reflection is a powerful impetus for teacher development

Reflective teaching is a mark of a concerned teacher who is skilled enough to examine his/her beliefs, values and assumptions behind the teaching practice.

The insights derived from this exercise are used to improve your practice.

According to Bailey (1997) reflective teaching is about a skilled teaching of knowing what to do.

You examine your work so that you consider alternative ways of ascertaining that your students learn.

This takes place through searching for deeper understanding of your teaching.

So, you are able to monitor, critique and defend that which you implement and how you implement it.

- It is possible that reflective teaching may turn you to be a researcher because of its dimension of self inquiry.
- Through self inquiry, much of what is unknown becomes clear so that you end up improving your practice and planning.
- Thus, your personal experiences are turned into stories which can be shared with your peers.
- In this manner, reflective teaching is a professional alternative to action research.
- It is a personal means of conducting your own ongoing professional life by solving problems in a systematic manner.

What are you doing in reflective teaching? You are integrating theory and practice.

By making use of constructivist approach you address issues which emanate from your practice and experience. You are able to do this because you care about your profession which prepares young people for life in the society.

Is this your self fulfilling prophecy? If so, then reflective teaching is an intrinsic motivational device to your work.

How is reflective teaching effected?

- In the first place there must be something which calls for your reflection. Attention to the issue of concern is important. The expectation is that you must gather information on what is of concern. This is step one of reflective teaching.
- There are various ways of collecting the information. They include:

• Keeping of a journal which is a form of diary of your experiences. You will need to keep a record of experiences which have happened. This makes it be phenomenological in nature. It has to be done consistently if the information will be of any worth. It is an activity whereby the teacher takes notes of the situation he/she is undergoing. These notes are in form of personal statements focusing on feelings, opinions and perceptions about others with whom the teacher comes in contact with during the course of his/her practice (Fraenkel and Wallen, 1992). What one records is not for public access. It is a personal record of letting out ones feelings and skills keeping them private. They are generally put down on daily basis for purpose of hoping to improve practice by later consultation of the records

- Journal writing is an opportunity for you to use the process of writing to describe and explore your teaching and learning practices. According Fraenkel and Wallen (1992) journal keeping is one of the tools under use to promote teachers development of reflective thinking. The writing engages you in a deeper level of awareness and response to teaching than you would obtain by merely discussing teaching in terms of teaching procedures and lesson plans.

Peer mentoring takes form of you observing a mentor's practice or the mentor observes your practice and a record is made for feedback purposes (Arther, Davision and Moss, 1997). The focus of attention may be on how to keep students lively in a class discussion. One way of doing it is by being a non-participant observer of classroom practice. This is an act of attending to an area of interest by being present to look at and listen to what is happening in a focused manner. This is opposite to participant observation where you penetrate the class to learn what is there to be learn. In non-participant observation you just observe without getting involved; the observation is done from sidelines. You describe the scene in your own way; the students, the teacher and the dialogue events without ignoring the obvious. You do all that to attach meaning to the teacher's practice.

- Recording of your lessons through either audio or
- video or even by use of paper and pencil. For instance,
- you can use a tape recorder to tap the types of
- questions students pose in a mathematics lesson.
- These recorded experiences become the focus of what
- to reflect upon.

- Feedback from your students. This can be done
- through ordinary questioning. It may be a little
- advanced by you giving questionnaires to students.
- Their responses become data targeting their perspectives towards what you may have to choose
- as a way forward.

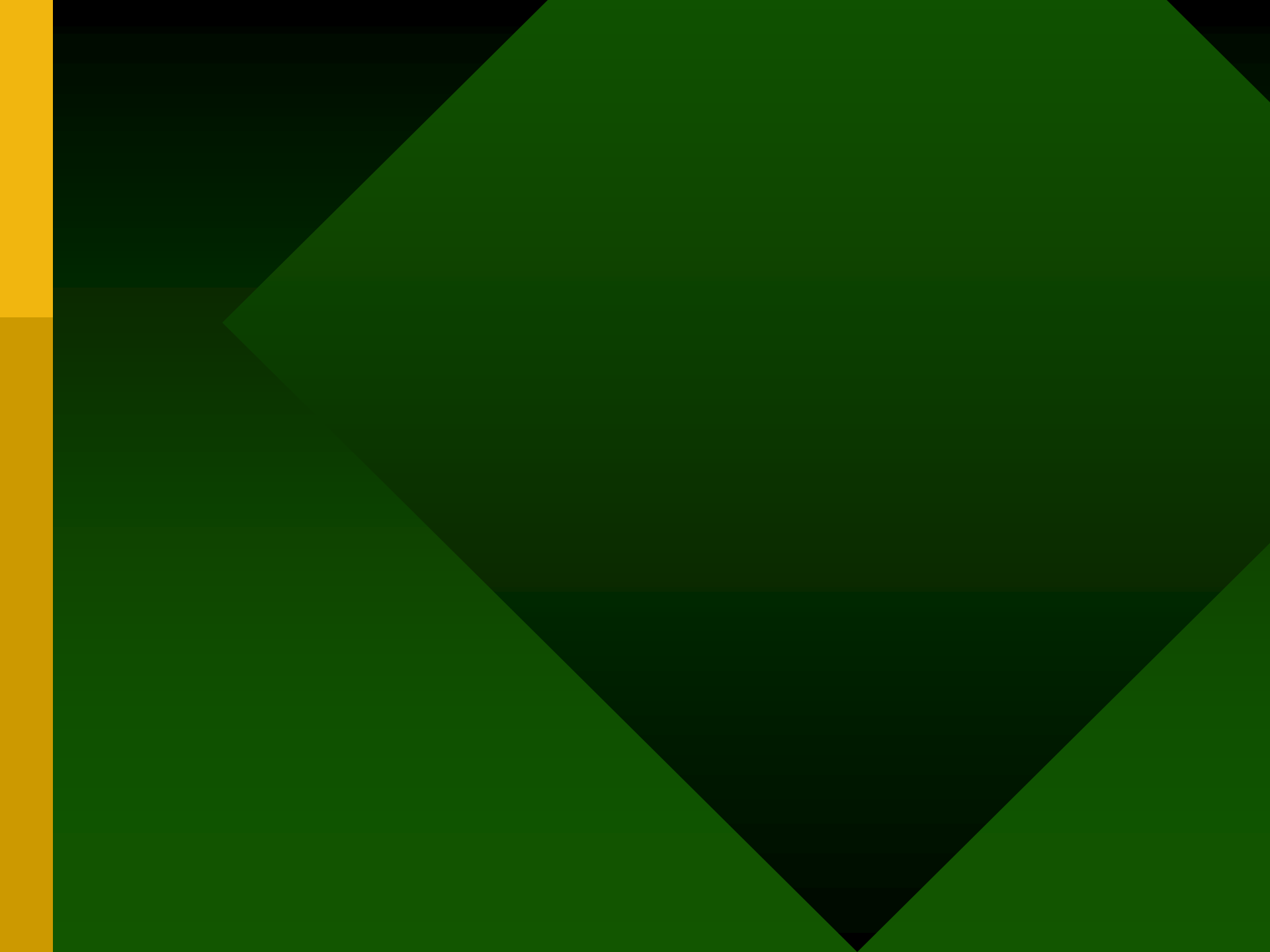
The other steps which follow each other are:

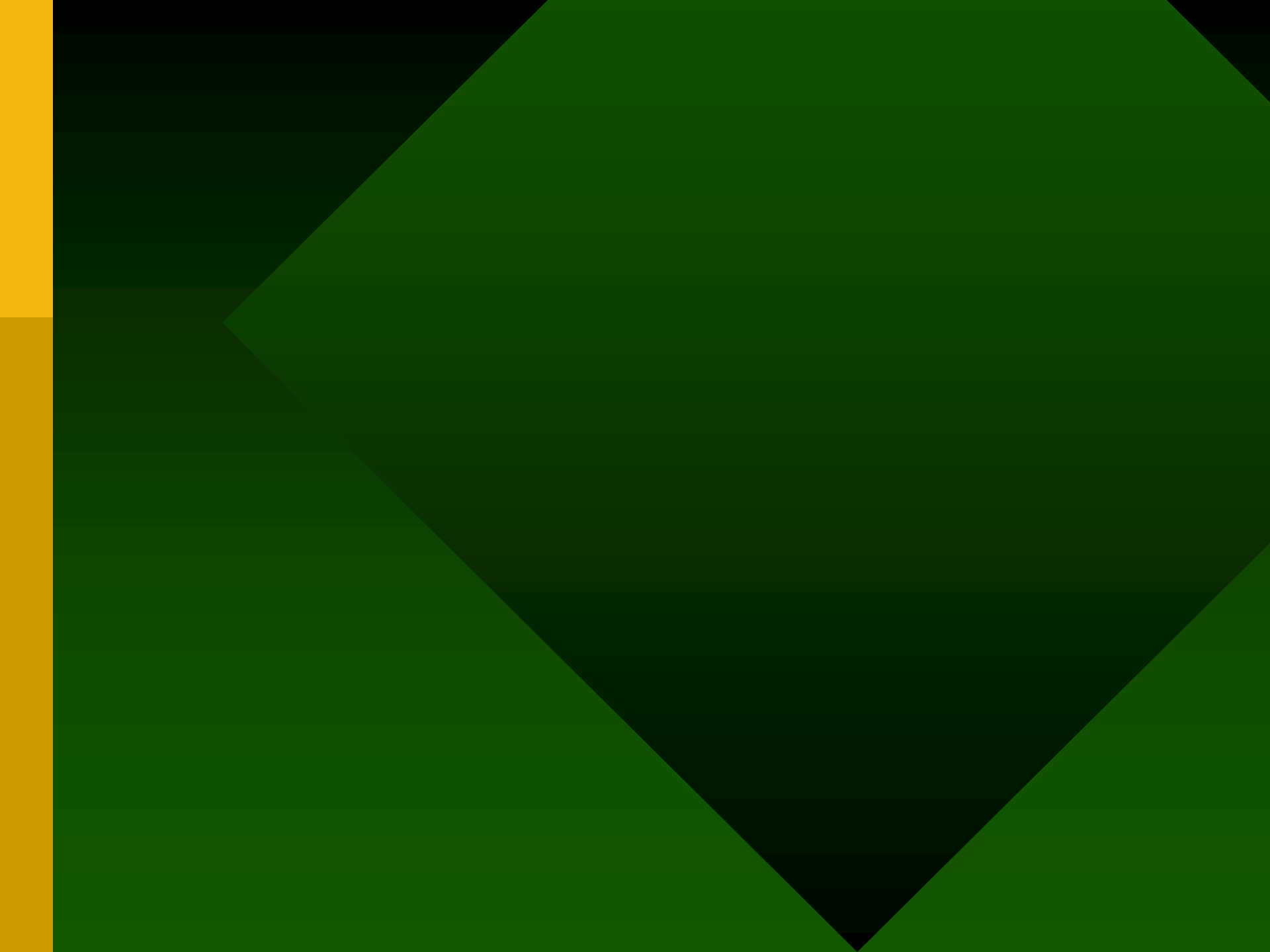
- Critically think about the patterns arising from the specific record. You are engaged in searching for understanding by asking questions about what and why practices. These questions let you not take anything in the classroom practice for granted. Together with critical thinking are dimensions like heuristic, creative and insightful thinking which stress on how you solve and deal with issues at hand. Insightful thinking lets you to be rationally informed of what is happening, while creative thinking is about imaginative and original ideas and ways of doing things by identifying
 - alternatives.

- Refer to an expert who may be a peer or a mentor to have a discussion with him/her about emerging issues of your practice. This lets you be open minded to broaden your perspectives as you pose to him/her questions which make the stories memorable.
- Read as a way to find out more about the patterns emerging from the collected information. This keeps you informed.

Associate with colleagues in a meeting, seminar, conference or workshop.

Attend seminars, workshops and conferences which provide new perspectives to emerging issues about your practice.





The final step is about you deciding on what to do. The aspect of decision making seems to suggest that there are alternatives and their implications. Implement the change if need be as a way of enhancing your professional development. At this point, the process of reflection begins again, as it is cyclic.

Some technology-integrated ways for reflection

- Self-observation
- Teaching journal
- Action research

Self-observation

This is a technique where you observe and evaluate yourself under the guidance of an observation checklist or some questions you decide on before the observation.

Of course, to be able to observe yourself, first you need to **videotape** your lesson!

Tips for videotaping your lesson

1. Get someone experienced with the equipment to help you.
2. Tell him/her what aspects of the lesson to focus on during the filming session.
3. If you will videotape yourself, place the video-camera so that the whole class can be viewed.

Guiding questions in self-observation

- You want to get information about
- Class participation and student responses
- Pacing of the class and amount of student engagement
- On-task behaviour of specific students
- Whether or not your lesson was a successful one

Procedure for class participation

Record students' verbal participation by using symbols on a seating chart to indicate who responds and how.

Use a symbol each time a student speaks.

*** Use this form to record and reflect ***

Procedure for class pacing & student engagement observation

- Record the time for each activity and any observations about student engagement for that activity.

Procedure for on-task behavior observation

Write the time and the activity on the chart at the top of the form.

Scan the room every 5 - 10 minutes and record

- the appropriate symbol for each student on the seating chart next to the number corresponding to the activity.
- ***Use this form to record and reflect***

Procedure for self-evaluation

- Rate yourself on teaching behaviors that are conducive to a successful lesson.
- ***Use this form to evaluate your teaching behaviours and reflect upon them***

Teaching Journal

- This is a place where you write about your experiences or record some specific teaching events, and your feelings about them on a periodical basis. As you go through the reflective cycle, you can write down your experiences on your journal.
- Still we have a technology-integrated way that can be used as a teaching journal; blogs!

Action research

- is a reflective process of progressive problem solving.
- is the systematic, reflective study of a teacher's actions and the effects of these actions in a school or classroom context.
- includes data collection and data analysis

Online ways for data collection and analysis

- After you decided on your problem area that you want to study on you can use some free online survey tools to prepare surveys to collect data. They also provide help to analyze the data.
- *Here are some of them..*
 - *Survey Monkey.com*
 - *Survey Share.com*
 - *Free online Surveys.com*

Thank You!