

Reflection is a complex process that we must engage in if we are to construct meaning and deepen our understanding of personal life experiences. It is through thoughtful and intentional reflection that we are able to develop a true sense of what is important and valuable to us in our own lives. As teachers, reflective practice allows us to determine how impactful our teaching is on our students and what our next steps should be in helping our students attain success. Reflection comes in many forms including meta-cognition or thinking about thinking, building connections to previous learning, processing information through a synthesis and evaluation of the content, and extending our understanding of the subject matter beyond a specific lesson (York-Barr, Sommers, Ghore, Montie, pg. xvii)

Individual reflection is an integral part of my own teaching practice. I feel it is through individual reflective practice that I am able to hone my own skills as an educator, thus improving the quality of education I provide my students. I take time daily to reflect on what it is I plan to teach and how I will deliver instruction in a meaningful way as well as reflect afterwards on what worked well and what did not so that I can modify, adapt or change my delivery of instruction in the future. Individual reflection allows me to determine where I need to head next in my teaching in order to support the needs of my students' and provide them with the highest quality education. Individual reflective practice is something I believe strongly in and thus is an integrated aspect of my students' school experience as well. Over the years, I have developed a system for having my students' become reflective practitioners of their own learning. My students' reflect on their understanding of specific learning targets and the success of specific instructional strategies in addition to personal academic and life skills goals they've set. I hope to instill in my students a sense of understanding and value surrounding the art of reflection.

Sometimes I feel, with my own reflective practice, that I can be too casual in the way in which I choose to reflect. During this course, I intend to learn ways in which I can be more systematic in my approach to individual reflection. I believe in doing so I will be able to maximize my growth and understanding of my own teaching practice. I would also love to learn more strategies I can use with my students around individual reflection so that I may make their school experience more meaningful.

When I consider the area of collaborative reflective practice, I find myself feeling less comfortable. The school in which I work follows a Professional Learning Community model and so collaborative reflective practice is something I engage in with my grade-level team and other colleagues. When it comes to collaborative reflection, one must be willing to be vulnerable, open and honest. These can be difficult things to do, especially if the group you are collaborating with is not one where complete trust and support has first been established. This is an area I intend to develop during this course. I want to learn how to successfully transition from individual reflective practice to collaborative reflective practice. Because my school follows a PLC model, one in which full participation is mandatory, I have encountered individuals who have been resistant to participating fully in the collaborative reflection process. I intend to learn strategies for how to encourage and foster a sense of genuine collaboration with my colleagues so that our time spent reflecting together is both purposeful and meaningful.

Although I have heard the Danielson Framework mentioned often, both in my Masters program and within my school district, I do not feel I know as much about it as I should. I know that the Danielson Framework is currently used in my district as a way to evaluate teachers. It consists of four main categories: planning and preparation, classroom environment, instruction and professional responsibilities. Within those categories are 22 components and within the components there are many elements that define and describe those components. I hope to finish this course with a greater understanding of the intent and purpose of the framework and how it is grounded in research. Through an increased understanding of the Danielson Framework, I also hope to discover ways in which to improve my craft so I am better able to demonstrate the components and elements as defined within the framework.

Individual reflection is an area where I generally feel I am strong while collaborative reflection is an area I feel less confident. I look forward to the opportunity to develop a greater understanding surrounding reflective practice for the purpose of improving the learning and educational experience of my students.