

# Building Reflective Practice

"Promise me you'll always remember:  
You're braver than you  
believe, and stronger  
than you seem, and  
smarter than you think."



AISWA Graduate to Proficient Program 2014



# Building a Reflective Practice

Telling stories of who we are as teachers can assist us to become reflective practitioners. The following process that we will walk through over the next few weeks is designed to help you reflect on where you are at the moment and where you want to go as a teacher. In addition it will encourage you to look at what is important to your school and how you are able to contribute to achieving their vision.

It is important to realise that the following is a process, which if it is followed, will help you demonstrate how you are working at the proficient phase of the standards. We will continue to add to this folder as this course progresses, so please bring it with you to each of the sessions.

We will complete parts of the process during the course and others parts will need to be completed in between sessions.

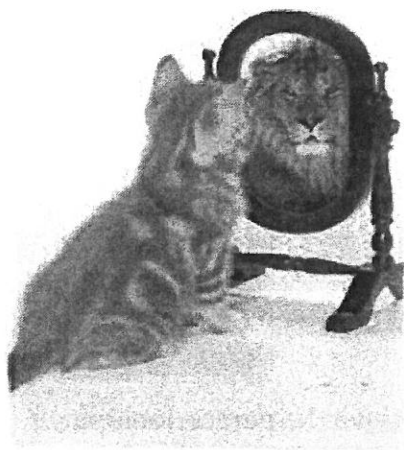
## An overview of the process is:

1. Connect with your ideal self in an ideal world ~ what do I believe
2. Tell the story of who you are now using 6 – 8 artefacts of practice
3. Link the artefacts to the standards
4. Select an area of focus to improve on
5. How does it look to get 'better' as a teacher
6. Reflecting on your performance
7. Working with a coach/mentor
8. Recording the journey



# What do I Believe?

What we believe affects both what we do and how we go about it; beliefs shape the way we think the world should work and how others should behave. Often we feel disappointed in ourselves or disgruntled with those around us when we or others don't live up to the way we believe it should go.



Sometimes we assume that others share our beliefs (or schema) about the world, which is why it can be important to ask the questions which check if this is so; some of the questions in a school setting might be:

- What is effective teaching in this school?
  - What does the school value?
  - What practices should be in evidence in every classroom in the school?
- What are the school's priorities for improvement?
  - What is the role of students, teachers and parents in this school?

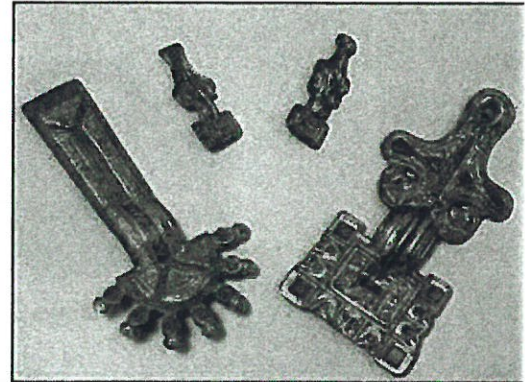
Sharing and agreeing about the above issues helps schools to develop internal coherence which is important in ensuring that schools continually improve.

In order to be reflective it is important to identify what believe is important, try the following exercise.

My top 5 beliefs		
<i>People are</i>	<i>Education should</i>	<i>Teaching is</i>

# Artefacts of Practice

Artefacts of practice are not necessarily evidence of working at a particular phase of the teacher standards, rather it is the conversation or the observation of an aspect of practice that forms the evidence. *Evidence* must be directly observable. Human beings can only provide four types of directly observable evidence of abstract learning. We can *do* things, *say* things, *make* or *write* things. It is from the things people do, say, make or write that we infer learning, emotions, knowledge, understanding and learning in general.

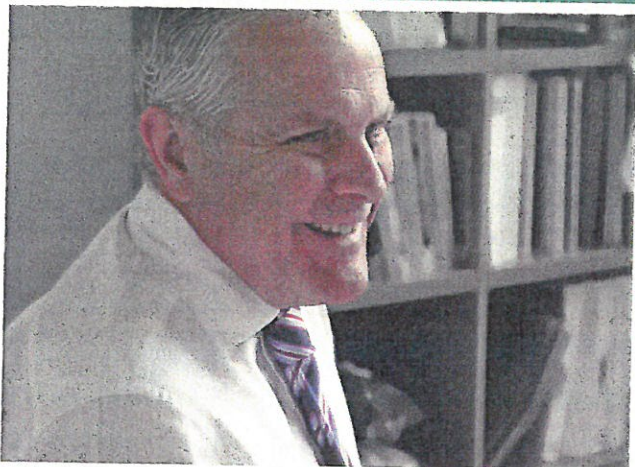


Artefacts of practice are like a museum exhibit, in that they give the person looking at the artefacts and hearing the story around them an insight into your practice and development as a teacher.

This list is not exhaustive and other categories and evidence types may be used to demonstrate the achievement of the Standards.

<p><b>Teaching and learning programs:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; term, semester or full year teaching and learning programs</li> <li>&gt; lesson plans</li> <li>&gt; learning resources</li> <li>&gt; learning tasks and activities</li> <li>&gt; evaluation of teaching and learning programs</li> <li>&gt; individual student learning plans.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Classroom observations:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; lesson observation notes</li> <li>&gt; post-observation meeting notes</li> <li>&gt; video clips of practice</li> <li>&gt; video/photos of classroom environment</li> <li>&gt; student survey data</li> <li>&gt; peer observation notes.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Student assessment and learning:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; student conference outcomes</li> <li>&gt; teacher records of student performance</li> <li>&gt; assessment plan</li> <li>&gt; assessment schedule</li> <li>&gt; assessment tools/tests/strategies</li> <li>&gt; student self/peer assessment feedback</li> <li>&gt; diagnostic assessments</li> <li>&gt; exhibitions/display of student work, feedback and outcomes.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Student assessment and learning:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; student conference outcomes</li> <li>&gt; teacher records of student performance</li> <li>&gt; assessment plan</li> <li>&gt; assessment schedule</li> <li>&gt; assessment tools/tests/strategies</li> <li>&gt; student self/peer assessment feedback</li> <li>&gt; diagnostic assessments</li> <li>&gt; exhibitions/display of student work, feedback and outcomes.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Reflection and feedback:</b></p> <p>Importantly, feedback requires the support of direct evidence to which it relates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; student conference notes</li> <li>&gt; teacher student records</li> <li>&gt; student feedback and survey data</li> <li>&gt; parent-teacher interview notes</li> <li>&gt; parent feedback</li> <li>&gt; 360 degree feedback</li> <li>&gt; peer feedback</li> <li>&gt; professional reading log and reflection</li> <li>&gt; diary of practice and reflection</li> <li>&gt; performance review feedback.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Reflection and feedback:</b></p> <p>Importantly, feedback requires the support of direct evidence to which it relates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; student conference notes</li> <li>&gt; teacher student records</li> <li>&gt; student feedback and survey data</li> <li>&gt; parent-teacher interview notes</li> <li>&gt; parent feedback</li> <li>&gt; 360 degree feedback</li> <li>&gt; peer feedback</li> <li>&gt; professional reading log and reflection</li> <li>&gt; diary of practice and reflection</li> <li>&gt; performance review feedback.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Collaboration and communication:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; video clip of team teaching</li> <li>&gt; resources co-constructed/shared with colleagues</li> <li>&gt; common assessment tasks</li> <li>&gt; team meeting notes</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; meeting logs</li> <li>&gt; emails/letters/correspondence</li> <li>&gt; parent teacher interview notes</li> <li>&gt; community partnerships and engagement notes and meeting logs</li> <li>&gt; policy review and development notes and meeting logs.</li> </ul>

# Developing a professional mindset



The ability to articulate what it is that you actually do as a teacher on a daily basis and the capacity to reflect on your practice are learned skills. Effective teachers are able to do this objectively which allows them to continually improve their practice, continue to develop and grow as professionals and continually improve outcomes for students.

Effective teachers possess a variety of skill sets that just seem to appear magically. I'm willing to bet that at the core of each developed skill lays a chamber that holds remnants of reflection. Most likely, the effective teachers that we know and admire are those who learned how to be extremely reflective somewhere along the way. They're the kind of teacher who repeatedly self-questions. The cycle of planning, teaching, and reflecting runs continuously through their veins, grounding their practice. They value the reflective phase of the cycle and see it as a means of growth that leads to effective teaching and student success. They repeat this cycle again and again until objectives are met.

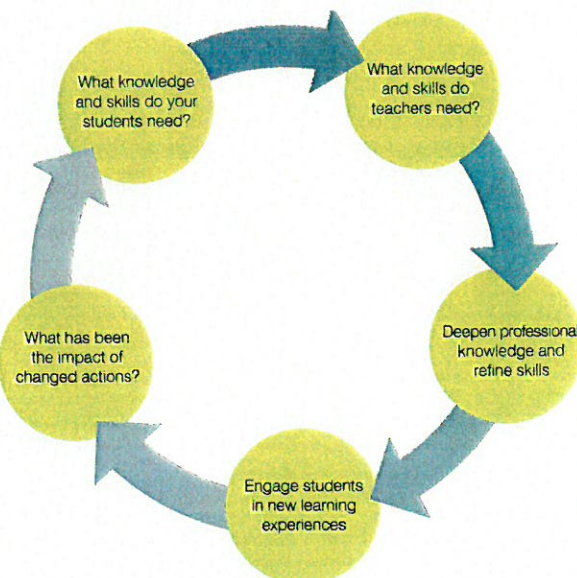
The whole truth of the matter is that effective teachers aren't born with "it." The "it" of an effective teacher is developed through the reflection process over a period of time (Monteiro 2013, para 5).

There are a variety of ways to reflect on your practice and many questions you can ask yourself about your practice.

To reflect on your practice, it is necessary to use an effective process, and have the correct mindset and guidance. According to Timperley et al. (2008), teachers must use a process of inquiry and systematic knowledge building to learn more effective teaching practices. Hattie and Timperley (2007) outline the following three questions that a learner must be able to answer to undertake effective formative assessment:

- ◆ Where am I going?
- ◆ How am I doing?
- ◆ Where to next?

A cycle of teacher inquiry and knowledge building to promote valued student outcomes is represented in the following diagram. You can use this to reflect on your practice, and as a framework for working through the content of this section.



Adapted from: Teacher professional learning and development by Helen Timperley (2008)

## What does it mean to be a professional?

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As a teacher you are a professional, just like doctors, lawyers, architects and so on, and you are also a member of a profession. So what does this actually mean?

According to Shulman (2004), professionals are those who are educated with and utilise bodies of knowledge to serve others. He describes professions as having “practice rooted in bodies of knowledge that are created, tested, elaborated, refuted, transformed, and reconstituted in colleges, universities, laboratories, libraries, and museums” (Shulman 2004, p. 14). Importantly, Shulman recognises one of the challenges for members of a profession is “*learning from experience...[and] from contemplation of their own practice*” (p. 15).

What this means for you, as a member of the teaching profession, is that it is your responsibility to share with colleagues, to learn from others, and to embrace lifelong learning. To increase your professional knowledge and enable yourself to grow as a professional, you must be able to continually reflect on your practice. Reflection is the key to growth, development and improving outcomes for your students. Developing a mindset around this should be a focus for you as a professional.

## Over to you

Consider the following quotation:

*We know from experience that there is not a widely shared view of what constitutes quality instruction – not among teachers, principals, or school district leaders. We think this poses a fundamental and challenging issue for educational leaders and policy makers. Without a shared understanding of what we mean by quality instruction, we have no basis from which to mount an improvement effort (Fink & Markholt 2011, p. 5).*

- ◆ Do you agree with this statement? Why/why not?
- ◆ How do you define quality instruction?
- ◆ What evidence would you put forward to support your point of view?

## What do I believe about learning?

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The questions below are aimed at prompting your thinking about yourself as an educator, and what you believe about the ways young people learn. They encourage you to think about your teaching philosophy, teaching approach or teaching style, depending on which terminology you prefer, and what makes you the teacher that you are. The role of learning theories and how you structure the learning for your students are key elements within this process.

- ◆ Do you have a theory about how students learn?
- ◆ What is the relationship between learning theories and practice?
- ◆ What knowledge and skills do you need in order to impact upon student learning?
- ◆ What is the importance of prior knowledge in the learning process?
- ◆ What does your management of resources and design of the learning space reveal about how you think students learn best?

It is easy to fall into the same patterns and neglect to look at things from different perspectives. Your answers to the above questions may have you thinking and questioning what you do each day in your role as a teacher. These are just a few questions you may want to ask yourself and you will be able to think of many more.

## What is my teaching philosophy?

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Your teaching philosophy is possibly something you have not thought about since you trained to be a teacher. You might like to talk to your colleagues both in your school and beyond about what their teaching philosophies are, and you might also like to search the internet to see some examples. Remember that your teaching philosophy will grow and develop as you evolve as a practitioner and it should be grounded in pedagogical theory.

In thinking about and documenting your teaching philosophy you might like to use the following questions to frame your thinking:

- ◆ Why did you become a teacher?
- ◆ What makes you teach the way you do?
- ◆ How do the Standards influence your development as a teacher?
- ◆ What is the role of the teacher in the learning process?
- ◆ What is the role of the students in the learning process?
- ◆ What have been the most significant influences on your practice as a teacher?



## Over to you

Review your teaching philosophy and the pedagogical theories in which it is grounded. What is the value in sharing and discussing your teaching philosophy and practice with colleagues?

Once documented you can use your teaching philosophy to help you reflect on your practice, develop applications for a new position or promotion, or as the basis for performance and development discussions. In what other ways might you draw on your teaching philosophy?

## How do I reflect on my teaching?

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You can also reflect on a particular lesson rather than focus on your whole role as a teacher. You can do this by yourself, or to enrich the reflection you may like to have a coaching conversation with a colleague. Some questions you might like to use for the reflection include:

- ◆ How did you feel about this lesson?
- ◆ What were the strengths of this lesson?
- ◆ What strategies worked well with your students?
- ◆ How did your lesson meet the learning objectives?
- ◆ What did you observe about your students during this lesson?
- ◆ When were your students most engaged?

- ◆ How did your students react to the lesson and is it what you expected from them?
- ◆ What evidence do you have to show that the students learned?
- ◆ How did your method of assessment provide information about the level of student understanding?
- ◆ Which part of the lesson felt most challenging? For you? For the students?
- ◆ Did you do anything differently to what you had initially planned?
- ◆ What aspects of the lesson might you do differently next time?
- ◆ What could you do to enhance the lesson and maximise the learning of students?
- ◆ Is there anything specific about your teaching that you want to improve?
- ◆ Do you have a mentor/critical friend to support you as you continue with planning for instruction?
- ◆ Did you use student data to inform the lesson development?
- ◆ Do you gather feedback from your students during this lesson to inform future practice?

(Questions adapted from Marzano Research Laboratory 2012)

## Over to you

You may also think about how reflecting in this way enables you to learn about your teaching practice. What conclusions can you draw and how may this impact on your practice?

## How do I reflect on other aspects of my role as a teacher?

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A teacher's role involves much more than just spending time in a classroom. It also includes conversations with parents/guardians, taking on positions of responsibility, providing extra help for students, mentoring a colleague, and going to school camp, to name just a few.

Think about the following questions in relation to your own practice:

- ◆ How often do you speak with parents/guardians? Would you like to speak with them more often? If so, how could you facilitate this?
- ◆ What is the focus of your conversations with parents/guardians? Is this a two-way conversation?
- ◆ How do you ensure that students receive the extra help that they need?
- ◆ What extracurricular activities are you involved in?
- ◆ How do you help to professionally develop your colleagues?
- ◆ Why do you help to professionally develop colleagues?

Undertaking a self-assessment can be very powerful. A free online Self-Assessment Tool (SAT) based on the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers is available on the AITSL website and this enables teachers at all career stages to reflect upon their practice.

All of the questions and suggestions so far are to encourage you to dig deeper about who you are as a teacher, critically reflect on your practice and make a conscious decision to be an active learner and really think about what it is that you do each and every day.

Why would you want to do this? Because the only way to improve is to make a concerted effort to do so. Reflection is the key to improvement, and your ongoing growth and development as a professional will depend on your ability to reflect on your practice. To assist you there are tools available, including through your employer and the Teacher Toolkit (AITSL 2014).



**Self-Assessment Tool**  
[www.selfassessment.aitsl.edu.au](http://www.selfassessment.aitsl.edu.au)

## Who can help me improve and reflect on my practice?

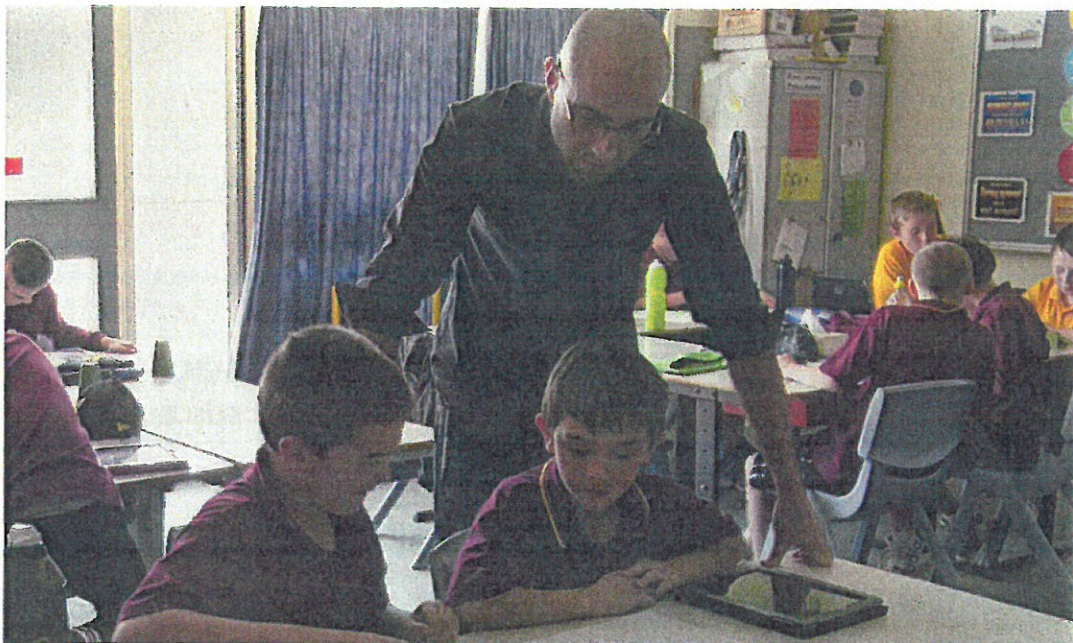
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Having reflected on your own teaching philosophy and practice in a variety of ways, establishing a critical friend and developing this relationship will enable you to gain further insight into your practice from a different perspective. A critical friend is someone who can be with you on the journey to help you develop and grow and continually improve your professional practice.

A critical friend is:

**a trusted person who asks provocative questions, provides data to be examined through another lens, and offers critiques of a person's work as a friend. A critical friend takes the time to fully understand the context of the work presented and the outcomes that the person or group is working toward. The friend is an advocate for the success of that work (Costa & Kallick 1993, p. 50).**

Put some thought into who could be a critical friend for you, remembering that you have access to a variety of networks, both within and external to your school. You may have multiple critical friends who can help you to improve different aspects of your practice. Some examples include: curriculum leader, principal, network member and colleague from another school. What is important is that you develop a mindset of reflection and you work to further yourself as a professional to improve your individual practice, the practice of others and that of the teaching profession.



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- Teaching strategies.
  - Learning objectives.
  - how did you measure if they learned anything? Pretest?
  - Evaluation of activity.
- Be explicit about learning if you ask any student what are you learning today?

18/07/14



**Working as a teacher:  
What others might not tell you.**

Janet Wilmot  
18 July 2014

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**+ Knowing and understanding your role**



The ability to ruminate and to critically analyse your own performance and personal attitudes cannot be overstated.

*Hall and Simons, 2008*

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**+ Knowing and understanding your role**

■ What is your job title?




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**+ Knowing and understanding your role**

- What is your job title?
- Do you have a job description?
- What do you spend most of your time doing?
- What should you spend most of your time doing?



**+ Knowing and understanding your role**

- What is your job title?
- Do you have a job description?
- What do you spend most of your time doing?




**+ Knowing and understanding your role**

- What is your job title?
- Do you have a job description?



**+ Knowing and understanding your role**

- What is your job title?
- Do you have a job description?
- What do you spend most of your time doing?
- What should you spend most of your time doing?
- How do you measure your success?



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**+ STOP and SHARE**



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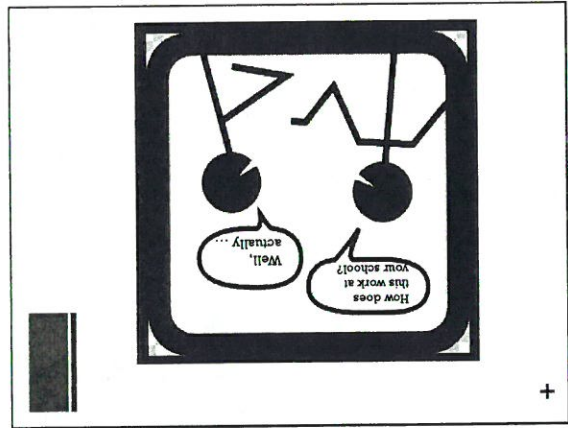
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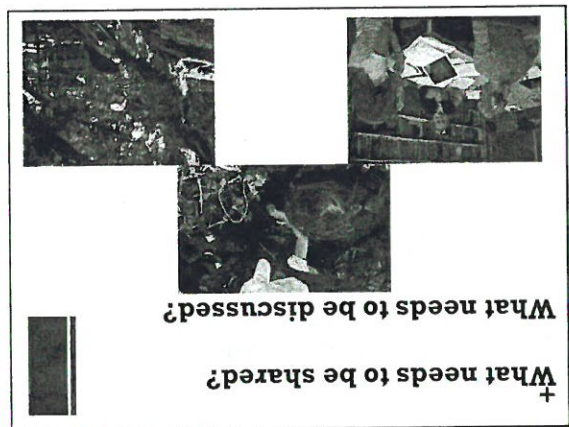
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**Working with those in your team** +

■ "When an experienced person and a new person work together in a nurturing relationship, each gets something of real value from the other. The experienced person gains energy; the new person gains inspiration. Isolation fades, connection flourishes, pain turns into wisdom – joyful wisdom that make the difficulties in our work endurable and keeps both the experienced and the new person coming back for more."

A Tale of Two Children, David Shoemaker  
Pis Delta Kappan, February 2003



+ What's important here?

What's difficult?

What's beneficial?

What needs to be shared?

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+ Working with the boss




- clear communication
- feeling supported
- transparency.
- understands complexity of role.

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+ What do you think?



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**What's important here?**

- Having a 'can do' attitude
- Being totally reliable and 100% loyal
- Communicating effectively
- Discussing and understanding the goals
- Taking feedback on board professionally and not personally
- Committing to the students, the team and the school
- Dealing with conflict
- Being accountable

**A few comments from me:**

Your boss knows if you sit behind your desk doing your preparation in class when you should be teaching.


Your boss knows if you are late to class, late with reports, late with programs.

Your boss knows if you answer personal calls and emails during class when you should be teaching.

Your boss knows if you fail to make adjustments for those who need it.

Your boss knows .....

**What does the boss think?**



+ **Be yourself and have fun**



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+ **No excuses**

- Don't whinge, bitch, complain or moan
- Complaints are personal
- Critiques require effort and are constructive in improving things
- Learn from and acknowledge your mistakes

***I attribute my success to this: I never gave or took any excuse.***

Florence Nightingale

\* Always with a possible solution.

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+ **Have a vision**



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+ Meet, plan and learn together

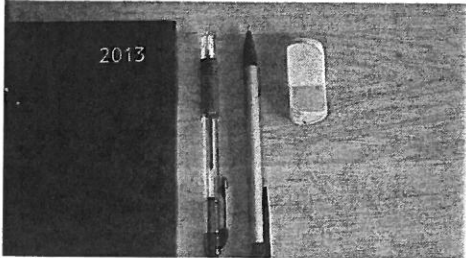


+ Make it happen



+ Be prepared to argue (politely) for what you believe in

**+ Be organised**



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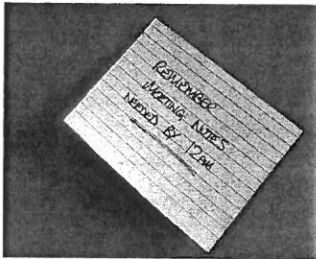
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**+ Meet deadlines .... Always!**



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**+ Prepare and be prepared - always!**



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+ Show them you care – maybe not like this!



+ Know your students



+ Know your colleagues



+ **Be as resourceful as your students**



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+ **Include your community**



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+ **Work smarter, not harder and don't waste time**



Got Email Overload?

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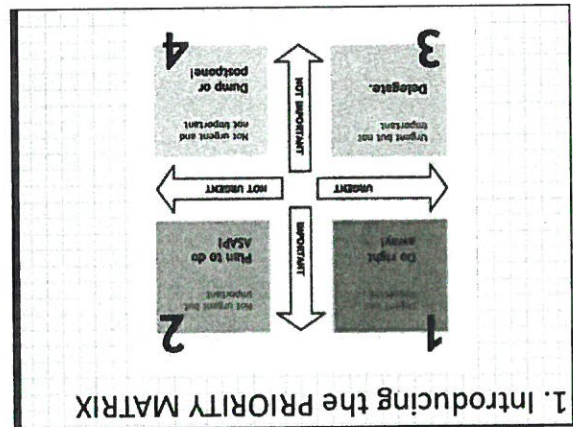
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**And finally.....**

- At the end of the day – reflect on what worked and what did not – take a short break
- Tidy your classroom
- Prioritise what needs to be done
- Make sure that your work is up to date
- Do what is not important only if you have the time
- When you have done your hours, go home and focus on yourself and those who you love - forget about your work!

**Set a good example**

- At the end of the day – reflect on what worked and what did not – take a short break
- Tidy your classroom
- Prioritise what needs to be done
- Make sure that your work is up to date
- Do what is not important only if you have the time
- When you have done your hours, go home and focus on yourself and those who you love - forget about your work!



+ **Never be afraid to seek help**



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systems in the world have good teachers all right, but they have them in numbers. High-performing systems have virtually all of their teachers on the move. It's a school thing, a professional thing, and a system thing. The only solutions that will work on any scale are those that mobilize the teaching force as a whole—including strategies where teachers push and support each other.

## CONCLUSION

*Teaching like a pro* is about undertaking difficult, inspiring work; constantly trying to improve practice; and working with all the collective might and ingenuity of professional colleagues to do so. This means three things that are at the heart of this book:

1. *Teaching like a pro* means continuously inquiring into and improving one's own teaching. It means constantly developing and reinvesting in professional capital. All teachers need to become not just good, but excellent at teaching. Driving up standards, narrowing achievement gaps, engaging young minds amid all the distractions that now surround them, and preparing young people to live successfully and cohesively in the 21st century are all higher order requirements that call for the highest quality of teaching. Mere proficiency or passing will no longer serve as the yardstick for success. Teachers and teaching will need to keep on improving for everyone, all the time. Constant inquiry and continuous individual and collective development are essential to professional success.

2. *Teaching like a pro* means planning teaching, improving teaching, and often doing teaching not as an isolated individual but as part of a high-performing team. It means developing shared professional capital within an organization and community. All successful organizations in all walks of life, including business, sports, and schools, build effective teams as a core part of performance. Again, we are relying not just on second-hand sources here. We have studied high performance in different sectors first hand—in ice hockey, soccer, rugby, retail, e-commerce, and automobile manufacturing, as well as in schools, school districts, and government departments. We have studied, been part of, seen, and felt up-close the power of team building, team performance, and team spirit for ourselves. Professionals understand the power of the team, promote the devel-

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oment of the team, and become integral parts of the team themselves. *Teaching like a pro* is not about yet more individual accountability, but about powerful collective responsibility.

3. *Teaching like a pro* means being part and parcel of the wider teaching profession and contributing to its development. To grow, professional capital must circulate freely, energetically, and openly. This means rethinking how teachers work with, support, and also challenge their colleagues. It means recasting teacher unions not only to become sources of outraged opposition to negative, imposed changes that narrow learning, harm students, and create burnout among classroom teachers, but also to become active and inspirational agents of changes that serve students, especially the most disadvantaged, improve quality among the teaching force, and put teachers in the vanguard of large-scale change. Contrary to their negative press, some unions and federations have already been taking the lead here—working in close partnerships with their governments in Alberta, Ontario, and Finland to improve teacher learning and innovation; or successfully challenging their governments, as in California when the government failed to provide the financial support that gives the most disadvantaged students proper opportunities to learn. Free circulation of professional capital also means that schools need to become less isolated from each other and that insecure districts and even principals should not be allowed to restrict or micromanage the professional learning and assistance that teachers can access from outside their own school or district.

In short, *teaching like a pro* is about improving as an individual, raising the performance of the team, and increasing quality across the whole profession. It is about developing, circulating, and reinvesting professional capital. Together, these things define what's worth fighting for as a teacher and in teaching.

But to change anything, we must first know what it is that we are changing. We must go much deeper into what that thing currently is. In the next chapter, therefore, we delve into the nature of teaching—beyond the nostalgic memories and stereotypes that many people hold of it. We can't change anything if, in reality, we are unclear about the starting point. It's time to expose the stereotypes and move beyond them to develop something more constructive together—a development that will profoundly increase the efficacy of the profession as a whole.

Best ways to teach  
to teach  
more effectively  
pedagogy  
NOT MINOR INNOVATION  
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teaching a team

Principles of practice

teaching



## Essentials qualities for a teacher

In order to set your personal goals and to reflect on your improving practice, take this opportunity to rate yourself on those qualities that you listed as essential for a teacher where 10 is outstanding and shown all the time and 1 is an area that you need to work on or that you do not demonstrate at present.

8	I demonstrate sound knowledge and understanding of the content of the Australian curriculum and how to teach it.
7	I am flexible in my approach to my teaching, responding to the needs of the students in my class.
6	I have a good range of pedagogical skills
9	I have a love of learning myself.
8	I have a sense of humour that I use regularly.
8	I am a reflective practitioner and regularly engage in self-reflection to improve my practice.
7	I set high expectations for myself and for my students.
6	I am a good listener.
6-7	I demonstrate patience and compassion when dealing with my students and colleagues.
5	I am fair and open-minded.
7	I demonstrate excellent written and oral communication skills.
7	I demonstrate excellent organisational skills.





# ACTIVE voice.

## Written Reports ~ some pointers

The following tips and examples will help teachers write clear, concise and meaningful comments by focusing on avoiding unnecessary information, jargon and other specialist terms.

Topics on this page include:

- Make comments easy to understand
- Avoid unnecessary information
- Do not use specialist terms
- Avoid very detailed curriculum descriptions
- Avoid comments which refer only to task completion
- Use evidence
- Focus on key aspects

### Make comments easy to understand

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Two connected ideas per sentence is an effective way of using the space available in the student report. The two ideas should be closely related and the first idea may introduce a topic, while the second may add detail to illustrate a quality of a student's work. For example:

- John's oral report on 'families' was informative (first idea), with several humorous anecdotes he had collected from elderly neighbours (second idea).

Alternatively, the second idea may provide a comparison between possible approaches to completing work. For example:

- Kate needs to use the internet more widely when researching (first idea) rather than relying on one or two sources for her assignments (second idea).

The second idea may also describe an associated kind of behaviour you wish to comment on, such as:

- She shared information with the team (first idea) and worked cooperatively to complete tasks on time (second idea).

Generally, sentences should be short and no longer than 25 words.

### Avoid unnecessary information

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Evaluate the aspects of a student's achievement and the improvements required in order to select the most important matters for the report. Avoid crowding the report with less important details and being too detailed.

Delete redundant words or sentences that do not change the meaning. For example, 'a range of different ideas' says no more than 'a range of ideas'.

Ensure the content of each section relates exclusively to that section. Some matters may be best reported in a different section. The content of the report should describe coherent links between the areas of achievement, the way forward, and the school's and the parents' roles in supporting this improvement.

Avoid unnecessary or repetitious expressions. 'Padding' adds no helpful information and takes up valuable space.

Less important information may be deferred to an interview or a conversation with the parent.

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## **Do not use specialist terms**

The report card should present information in clear, jargon-free language. For example, 'higher order thinking' represents a meaningful concept to teachers but not to most parents. Word choice should reflect community understanding, not professional terminology. For example, 'He has appropriately completed all of the nominated tasks' really means 'He completed all the expected work'.

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## **Avoid detailed curriculum descriptions**

Do not include detailed curriculum statements or lists of all the topics, learning activities and assignments covered. Parents are more interested in how their child is progressing towards expected levels of achievement and where they need to improve.

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## **Avoid comments which refer only to task completion**

Avoid comments that only refer to task completion and do not provide an evaluation. For example, do not write comments such as:

- 'Natalie has completed the course requirements.'  
There is no evaluation here and no indication of how well she has done.
- 'Justin has read the required four wide reading texts.'  
This is unhelpful unless it represents evidence of a real achievement for Justin, perhaps identified in an earlier report as a goal. Consider if the four texts were suitably demanding for his stage of learning and where or not he produced any kinds of responses to them.
- 'Tom enjoys using the computer for his presentations and has successfully completed a number of PowerPoint presentations this year.'  
This comment refers to enjoyment and task completion rather than learning achievement. Some kind of evaluation of Tom's achievement relative to the standards is needed.

Parents want to know what was learnt and how well, where improvement is needed and what should be done next.

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## **Use evidence**

Reports of judgements made about student achievement must be based on quality evidence of what each student has actually achieved against the standards. The evidence that sits behind the overall judgement and the scores and rating assigned provides the detail for the written comments about specific:

- areas of strength and specific areas for improvement
- ways to help the student continue to learn and develop future pathways
- ways for parents to assist the student's learning.