

The Practical Professor

No. 11

Quick and easy tips, tools, and ideas for improving teaching and learning.

Good to Great?

Reflective Practice # 3

Welcome to the third installment of our reflective practice series! This series gives you a variety of ways to become more of a reflective practitioner. The questions and exercises are accessible and quick to start working on, but also have the depth to engage you for considerable time if you choose to fully reflect upon them.

There are three questions in this issue. Simple. Quick. Answering them will give you a sense of accomplishment.

- **What makes someone an acceptable teacher?**
- **What makes someone a good teacher?**
- **What makes someone a great teacher?**

Okay, we may have lied about the “simple” and “quick” part! Work on your personal list and consider asking several colleagues whose teaching you respect to also compile their lists. Gather the best lists you can at this time.

Once you have compiled a master list of what makes someone an **acceptable, good, or great** teacher, the next step is to determine where you position yourself on that spectrum. Largely “acceptable?” Mostly “good?” **Be honest.**

You could also ask the teaching experts: your students. For example, ask students to think about someone they consider to be a great teacher and then describe what she or he does that makes that person “great.” Having them do this in small groups gives you manageable information. Compare yourself to what they have written (or ask them how you compare after they are done).

Now it is up to you. Do you have the commitment to put in the **very hard work** necessary to become great? Lots of people can become acceptable teachers without too much hard work. However, moving from acceptable to good is tough! Moving from good to great takes a lot of time and a huge amount of energy. Remember, if you only do what everyone else does, you will only achieve what they achieve. That is good when it comes to taking inspiration from good teaching role models and mentors, but you have to work harder than they do, think more than they think, and push yourself harder than they push themselves in order to become the **greatest teacher you can be.**

In the next *The Practical Professor: Ask The Practical Professor #3!*

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