

The Practical Professor

No. 26

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

What Kind of Teacher Are You Becoming?

Reflective Practice Series #7

“There is no such thing as staying the same. You are either getting better or getting worse.” Years ago, a teaching sage told one of us this. The other one of us would like to add this: “Whatever you’re doing every day is what you are becoming.” These are true. As teachers we either improve or degrade. No stasis.

These reflective questions help you to determine what has been going on and to develop a conscious plan to change yourself. If you choose to engage, give yourself credit for having the courage both to do self-reflection and to realize that only you can change yourself – it is not dependent upon anyone or anything outside of yourself.

Consider

- What were your primary characteristics, strengths, and weaknesses as a teacher *5 – 8 years ago*?
- What are your primary characteristics, strengths, and weaknesses as a teacher *today*?
- What do you want your primary characteristics, strengths, and weaknesses as a teacher to be *in 10 years*?

As with almost all reflective questions, your reflection will be far more robust and accurate if you ask colleagues (and students) who know you well to give you feedback on the same questions. Incorporate their responses with your own to build a more complete picture of yourself... and what you are **becoming**.

Do you really want to spend your entire life as a teacher only being an average one? The question below will help you avoid procrastinating and **grow** as a teacher **now**.

The final question:

- **20 years after having me as a teacher, what do I want my students to say about me?**

Also available!

Teaching

A series of practical and innovative teaching tips for college faculty

The Top 10...

- No. 1 – The All-Important First Day of Class
- No. 2 – Ways to Make Your Teaching Life Easier
- No. 3 – The Crucial Second and Third Classes
- No. 4 – Ways to Show Students that You Respect Them
- No. 5 – Promote Effective Student Study Skills
- No. 6 – Components of a Well-Planned Class
- No. 7 – Observe Your Teaching Tendencies
- No. 8 – Ways to Keep Your Students Learning
- No. 9 – Ways to Get Feedback on Teaching from Students
- No. 10 – Using Short Writing to Assess Learning
- No. 11 – Getting More (and Better) Student Questions
- No. 12 – Mixing Things up Mid-Semester
- No. 13 – Engaging Different Input Preferences
- No. 14 – Helping Students Stay the Journey
- No. 15 – Ways to End Your Course
- No. 16 – Resources for Learning and Teaching
- No. 17 – Create a Memorable AND Functional Syllabus
- No. 18 – Ways to Build Your Students' Self-Efficacy
- No. 19 – Practical Study Tips to Share with Your Students
- No. 20 – Laddering Thinking Skills
- No. 21 – Learning Based Ways to End Lessons
- No. 22 – Ways and Reasons to Be Vulnerable While Teaching
- No. 23 – Using Student Groups
- No. 24 – Components of a Complete Learning Experience
- No. 25 – Ways to Use Visuals for Learning
- No. 26 – Students' Locus of Control
- No. 27 – Help Students with Rigorous Writing Assignments
- No. 28 – Ways to Shake Up Your Teaching
- No. 29 – Teaching to Inspire
- No. 30 – Paths to Mindfulness

Back issues of *The Teaching Top 10* and *The Practical Professor* can be found here:

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