



20 Ways to Reflect

Reflection ideas for teachers
in the MFL Classroom



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20 ways to get reflection into your classroom

The following ideas can be used in any MFL classroom. We recommend that you choose a couple of ideas to use first and then use them frequently to help embed reflection into your students' routine. Once they have mastered the technique, then add or replace it with another.

For your convenience, we have also created a number of templates to accompany these ideas that you can download, print and give to you students straight away.

1

The 1-minute essay

How much could you explain in one minute? At the end of a lesson, set a timer and ask students to write on a piece of paper the main points from a lesson or series of lessons and one big question they have. Collect these responses to inform your next steps.

2

Sketch notes

For the visual learners in the classroom, ask students to sketch out what they can do and what they need to improve using small symbols accompanied by a few words. Visual prompts can be just as powerful as written ones.

3

A reflection space

Dedicate a time to reflection in every lesson. This could be at the start of the lesson where you have on the board before students enter the room: 'What do I need to work on today?' Students quietly reflect and you can ask them during the lesson what they're working on today. This fosters greater reflective independence.

4

Exit slips or tickets

[Print out](#) some exit slips. Students have to write one thing that they have learnt in the lesson and one thing they need to improve. Students give this to you on the way out of the room and cannot leave until it is done. These can be returned to students in subsequent sessions for them to return to their initial reflections to see if they have progressed.

5

Reflection posters

On the front of the door of the classroom as students enter, have a question on the door that asks 'What do I need to do today to improve my learning?' At the exit to the classroom have a question that says 'What one thing has progressed today?' [Print out](#) an example.

6

Take a reflection break

If students are working on an extended task, then stop students periodically for 1-2 minutes where they share with their partner what they have achieved, what they still need to do and something they aspire to do. Their partner should be encouraged to offer some advice as to how this might be achieved based on their own experience.

7

Feed-forward

Students write feedback that you have given them at the top of their new piece of work. This will help them focus on what they need to improve in the next piece of work and avoid the repetition of errors.

8

Think-Pair-Share

Pose a question to students that requires them to reflect. They reflect for 30 seconds. They then share their reflections with the partner for 30 secs and then with a wider group. By sharing reflection ideas, this can help students to reflect more widely or analytically about their own progress. [Print out](#) a template here.

9

Sprint Retrospective

Every few weeks (or perhaps during a longer assessment period) students take a page in their copy book and write at the top of the page their goal e.g. to deliver my oral CBA. At the bottom of the page, students write their current stage of completion. Students then write the next steps to reach the goal across the middle of the page using arrows to indicate the steps. Students should also write questions to the sides of the steps where information is required to move forward. [Print out](#) a template here.

10

Ongoing oral feedback

During assessment periods where students are preparing for a large assessment. Go around the room asking students the following questions:

1. What's your goal?
2. What have you achieved so far?
3. What do you still need to do?
4. What are your questions?

Sometimes formative feedback will not be necessary because the reflection process is enough but sometimes you might be able to offer advice.

11

Thinking out loud

If students are tasked with completing a piece of writing, model the writing process out loud on the board. As you begin the writing process, vocalise everything that is going through your head to plan or complete the task as you complete it on the board. When you have finished, students write 3-5 things that they must do when undertaking this task based on their reflections of what they have seen and heard.

12

A Flick Back

Students at the beginning or end of a lesson flick back through their copy book or portfolio looking at what they have achieved. They then write a target at the top of their page for the next lesson explaining what they want to achieve over the coming lessons based on their rapid review of their own work.

13

Sentence-stem response

Write a phrase on the board that directs students to reflect on something specifically e.g. 'When I refer to events in the past tense, I must...'. Students then complete the sentence. This could also be collected in by the teacher to gather feedback about the extent of their learning more abstract, complex topics. [Print out](#) a template here.

14

Twitter reflection

Students write a reflection in less than 140 characters about what they have done well and what they need to improve. These can be written on post-it notes and then attached to pieces of work. [Print out](#) a template here.

15

3-2-1

Before starting a new topic, students write in their copy book, three things they think that they know, 2 things they know and 1 thing that they are certain about. This is a great activity for students to reflect on assessment objectives at the beginning of a topic. [Print out](#) a template here.

16

I know, I want to know, I know now.

Students write down what they know about a topic, then they write questions related to their knowledge e.g. 'I can write about myself' but 'How do I write about myself if I lived on an alien planet?'. At the end of a scheme of learning, students then write what they know now about how to achieve this. [Print out](#) a template here.

17

Inspiring quotations

There are many websites that have lots of quotations surrounding different topics such as group work, language learning etc. Put one of these quotations on the board before attempting a task with a skill attached and get students to reflect on the meaning of the quotation and how they can learn from it to progress.

18

Group work reflections

After group work, ask students to reflect on how they feel about how the group worked, what could be improved and how they participated in the group. This form of reflection is focused more on the skills of working in a group rather than working on subject content but the two can be incorporated.

19

Reflecting on feedback

After receiving feedback on a piece of work, ask students to reflect on it. They can consider the following questions:

1. What have I learned?
2. What went well?
3. What can I improve upon?
4. What goal(s) am I setting for next time?
5. Do I have any questions about my feedback?

20

Model reflection

The best way to help your students reflect is by modelling what reflection is. Talk about your experience as a language learner and what helps you learn. Share your reflections at the end of a class or unit with them. Set goals and reflect on them at the end of a unit as group.

Asking students how they learn

Giving students the opportunity to reflect on the ways in which they learn can be highly insightful, not only for you as a teacher but also for the students. Visual, Aural, Read/Write and Kinaesthetic or VARK questionnaires can be found freely on the internet to complete online or print.

However, VARK questionnaires should be used with caution. Whilst they can be useful to highlight a student's 'typical' learning style, it should not be used to pigeon-hole a student. For example, if a student presents as being a kinaesthetic learner, this does not mean that they are not also a visual or aural learner in some circumstances.

Also, it is good practice to expose learners to different forms of learning as often as possible.