

# The Importance of Reflection in Teaching Development

## Teaching Remotely: Shared Experiences

Summary of virtual panel event held on July 22nd, 2021  
[\[Link to Video\]](#)



In 2019 MUFA completed a comprehensive review of Student Evaluations and recommended a shift from teaching evaluation to reflections on teaching development. Teaching development can be informed by peer observations of teaching as well as students' reflections on learning at the course and program levels. A focus on the student experience and continuing to develop the practice of teaching has been further encapsulated in the recent launch of the 2021 Partnered on Teaching and Learning Strategy. Teaching evaluation is an important opportunity for educators to reflect and build on their teaching, but in a year that has been dramatically different than any we've encountered before, it is important for educators to reframe these evaluations.

### Panelists:

**Robert Fleisig** – Associate Professor, W. Booth School of Engineering Practice and Technology

**Catherine Anderson** – Director, Gender and Social Justice; Associate Professor (Teaching Stream), Department of Linguistics and Languages

**Teal McAteer** – Associate Professor, DeGroot School of Business

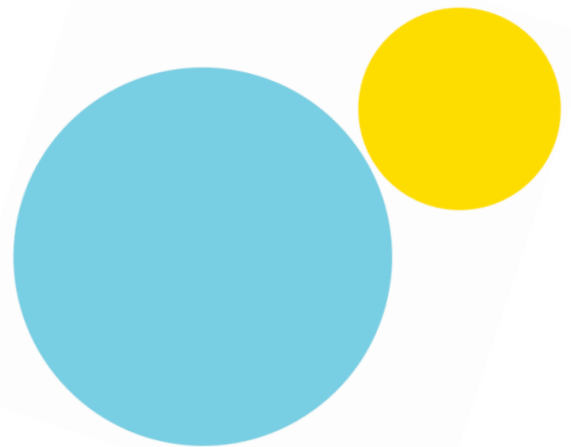
**Michel Grignon** – Professor, Department of Health, Aging & Society

### Panel Questions:

1. What does reflection mean to you?
2. What strategies have you used for reflection in the past? How have those changed over the past year?
3. What tools do you use for reflection?

### 3 Key Takeaways From The Panel:

1. Reflection in teaching is a constant practice that can occur through asking questions, having conversations with students and colleagues, during class, etc.
2. Trying new things as an educator and taking risks provides a great opportunity to reflect and create a great learning experience for students.
3. Teaching can be seen as relational and by seeing students as partners, there is always an opportunity to learn and reflect.



## Some Key Takeaways From Each Panelist:

### Robert Fleisig – Associate Professor, W. Booth School of Engineering Practice and Technology

- Reflection is about growth as an educator and improving the practice of effective teaching. When reflecting, try asking yourself what is it that you are reflecting on, what are the underlying assumptions that you are basing your reflection on, and what will you do with these reflections? [9:19 – 10:17]
- Sources of reflection can include pedagogical knowledge, literature, and student learning experiences. Learning experiences may be difficult to truly understand and requires careful observation and listening to students. [10:18 – 15:07]

### Catherine Anderson – Director, Gender and Social Justice; Associate Professor (Teaching Stream), Department of Linguistics and Languages

- Teaching is relational and is all about the unfolding relationship between the educator and students. Reflection for Catherine occurs during conversations with students. In a class period, reflection can occur through conversations to assess what is unfolding in the moment. [22:02 – 23:50]
- Catherine prefers to read and implement the end of term student feedback when actually preparing the course for the following year. She refers to notes she made while reflecting throughout the year as well as the student feedback in order to make the necessary improvements to her course. [25:17 – 26:45]

### Teal McAteer – Associate Professor, DeGroote School of Business

- To Teal, reflection means regularly looking at her integrity. It is important to determine who you are and ensure your teaching and practices are in alignment with this. [32:17- 33:27]
- Creating transformative learning experiences involves providing students with a safe space to experiment and creates a great opportunity for reflection to occur. Purposeful disruption is another strategy used to reflect in which you analyze what it is that you are resisting and why, and challenging yourself to step out of your comfort zone. [33:28 – 37:15]
- A tool that can be used when reflecting is the thermostat analogy whereby you assess the current situation, the desired situation, measure the magnitude of the gap between two, close the gap, and measure and reflect on the change that occurred. Another tool is to ask yourself what it is that you just learned, what it means to you, and what are you going to do about it (what, so what, now what). [37:16 – 39:20]

### Michel Grignon – Professor, Department of Health, Aging & Society

- Initially, Michel did most of his reflection when looking at students' performance and grades. Rather than just using outcome driven evidence, student experiences and feedback are also valuable insights. There is always room for improvement as an instructor and recognizing this can be a great first step to begin reflecting. [41:00 – 44:56]
- Michel has found it helpful to gather student feedback throughout the term in addition to the feedback provided at the end of term and create a one-pager outlining any necessary changes he should make when preparing the course for the following year. [46:38 – 47:33]

## Referenced Resources:

[The Reflective Practitioner, by Donald A. Schon](#)

[Green Guide by, STLHE](#)

[Student Partners Program](#)

[Tools for collecting student feedback](#)

[Partnered in Teaching and Learning Strategy](#)