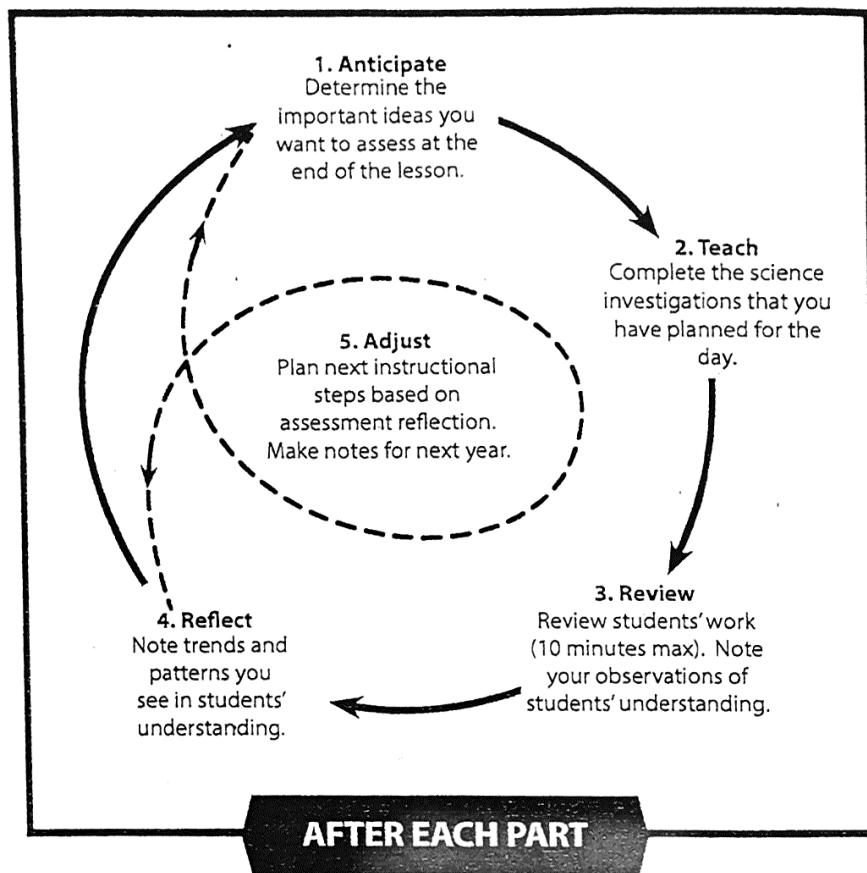


The Reflective Assessment Practice



Here's how to practice reflective assessment.

- 1. Anticipate.** Determine the big ideas in the lesson you are about to teach that are of greatest importance for building conceptual understanding. Write down the concepts that you want to check on a sheet of paper. Limit your assessment to one or two important ideas.
- 2. Teach the lesson.**
- 3. Review.** Have students turn in their notebooks open to *the page you will be reviewing*. (This will save you a lot of time.) Collect the notebooks at the end of class. Record what you observe. Make a tally mark for each student who "got it"; write in names for students who need help with a particular concept (spend only 10 minutes on this even if you don't review every student's work).
- 4. Reflect.** Describe the trends and patterns you see in the class's understanding of the concepts (5 minutes to reflect and plan next steps).
- 5. Next steps.** Describe the next steps you will take to clarify any problems, or note highlights you saw in students' understanding. This is the key to formative assessment. You must take some action to help students improve their understanding. If you do this process frequently, the next steps required should take only a few minutes of class time when the next part begins, or even be able to incorporate the information you have acquired into the next lesson as the concepts continue to build.

Popular Next-Step Strategies

Key points. Begin this strategy by discussing the item in question. After it is clear that students understand what is intended by the item prompt, call on individuals or groups to suggest key points that should be included in a complete answer. Write the key points on the board as phrases or individual words that will scaffold students' revision, rather than complete sentences they might mindlessly copy. When students return to their responses, they can number each of the key points they originally included in their answers, then add anything they missed.

Revision with color. Another way that students can revise their answers after a key-points discussion is to use colored pens or pencils and the three C's. As they read over their responses, they *confirm* correct information by underlining with a green pen; they *complete* their responses by adding information that was missing, using a blue pen; and they *correct* wrong information, using a red pen.

Review and critique anonymous student work. Use examples of student work from another class, or fabricate student work samples that emulate the problems students in your class are having. Project the work, using an overhead projector, a document camera, or an interactive whiteboard. Have students discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the responses. This is a good strategy to use when first getting students to write in their notebooks. It helps them understand expectations about what and how much to write.

Line of learning. Many teachers have students use a line of learning to show how their thinking has changed. When students return to original work (embedded or benchmark) to revise their understanding of a concept, they start by drawing and dating a line of learning under the original writing. The line of learning delineates students' original, individual thinking from their thinking after a class or group discussion has helped them reconsider and revise their thoughts.

Class debate. A student volunteers an answer to an item on an assessment (usually one that many students are having trouble with or one that elicits a persistent misconception). That student is in charge of the debate. He or she puts forth an answer or explanation. Other students agree or disagree, and must provide evidence to back up their thinking. Students are allowed to disagree with themselves if they hear an argument during the discussion that leads them to change their thinking. You can ask questions to keep the discussion on track, but otherwise you should stay on the sidelines.

Critical competitor. Use the critical-competitor strategy when you want students to attend to a specific detail. You need to present students with two things that are similar in all but one or two aspects. You can use any medium: two drawings, two pieces of writing, or a combination (such as a diagram compared to a description). The point is to compare two pieces of communication or representations in some way that will help students focus on an important detail they might be missing.

Sentence frames. After completing other self-assessment activities, have students consider all the items on the assessment and write a short reflection, using sentence frames. This strategy directs students to choose one or two items that they would like to tell you more about.

I used to think ____, but now I think ____.

I'm still confused about ____.

I should have gotten this one right, but I just ____.

I know ____, but I'm still not sure about ____.

The most important thing to remember about ____ is ____.

Now I know ____.

I shouldn't have gotten this one wrong, because I know ____.

Can you help me with ____?