Adoption of Self-Reflection as a Paradigm for a Culture Transformation

Karim Nasr, Assistant to the President for Academic Advancement
Richard McGrath (2010):

“The use of reflection in and on practice, seeks to improve the practice of teachers by understanding themselves as teachers, the purpose of which is to ultimately assist in improving the education.”
"It is widely accepted among researchers that self-regulation and reflection can be considered the prerequisites and key processes for developing as an expert (e.g., Schön, 1983) and also as a teacher (e.g., Biggs & Tang, 2007; Brookfield, 1995; Hatton & Smith, 1995; McAlpine, Weston, Beauchamp, Wiseman, & Beauchamp, 1999; Tynjälä, 2010)."

“Schön (1983) considered reflection as the means by which experts, such as teachers, can relate theory to practice, develop their own personal theoretical understanding, and guide their future actions. Some researchers see it as a more complex phenomenon, however, with emotional (Boud, Keogh, & Walker, 1985) and social (Connell, 2014; Fleck & Fitzpatrick, 2009; Mälkki, 2011) aspects.”

“Reflection does not, however, automatically create changes in teachers’ actions (Hatton & Smith, 1995; Mälkki & Lindblom-Ylänne, 2012). There can be obstacles that prevent teachers’ reflections from turning into actions; for example, if teachers do not have a clear understanding of what reflection is or how to be reflective (Gay & Kirkland, 2003; Mälkki & Lindblom-Ylänne, 2012). Also, a lack of time or the nature of the knowledge in one’s discipline may restrict a teacher from applying certain teaching methods (Ginns, Kitay, & Prosser, 2010; Mälkki & Lindblom-Ylänne, 2012).”
Ameneh Sammaknejad and Amir Marzban (2016):

“The originator of thinking about reflection, John Dewey (1938) said, “We don’t learn from experience. We learn from reflecting on experience.”

“The individuals involved in an ongoing cycle of self-observation and self-evaluation in order to understand their own actions and the reactions they operate in themselves and in learners. This reflection could be on whole aspects of classroom context and teacher itself, like teacher self-reflection (Brookfield and Thiel (1999)).”
What is self reflection?

- **Self-Examination** (Merriam Webster)

- “The activity of thinking about your own feelings and behaviour, and the reasons that may lie behind them.” (Cambridge Dictionary)
The Importance of Culture and Context:

A culture that is self-centered yet positive, empowering and engaging, a culture that is focused on “results” and on accountability, and is home to the notion of Life-Long Learning.
The Need for Transformation – New Paradigm:

Changes are needed on:

- **Macro-level**
  - System, institutions, and culture
  - Systems and processes need to be put in place to promote self-reflection

- **Micro-level**
  - At the individual-level
  - Self-evaluation and Self-assessment
The Need for Transformation – New Paradigm **KNEW**:

- **K**now thyself first and foremost
- **N**etwork and benefit from belonging to a community of self-reflective people
- **E**xecute and implement actions
- **W**rite and reflect on the experience.
K is for Know

Know thyself first and foremost

N is for Network

Network and belong to a community of self-reflective people

E is for Execute

Execute and implement actions

W is for Write

Write and reflect on the experience

Socrates “To know thyself is the beginning of wisdom.”

join a network and if one is not there, create a network or a community of self-reflective people and plan your actions benefiting from the network’s feedback

Execution with care has a strong bearing on securing the intended outcomes

Documenting, reflecting, and closing the loop on continuous process improvement
KNEW

PDCA
- Plan-Do-Check-Act

PLANN
- Establish outcomes
- Design learning/content
- Build assessments

DO
- Syllabus
- Exam, project, survey, etc.
- Course file, results

CHECK
- Analyse assessment data
- Propose improvements

ACT
- Adjust design
- Adjust delivery
- Adjust assessment

计划
- 计划
- 执行
- 检查
- 行动
Self-Reflection for Educators:

How many of us perform the exercise of end-of-year self-assessment? What is self-assessment?

Self-assessment is a professional development tool used by educators to reflect on the activities carried out by them during the year and allows for setting goals for next year in the three areas of Teaching, Research, and Service.

A self-reflection questionnaire allows educators to write down their observations by producing records documenting their reflective practices.
Self-Reflection Questions in the Area of Teaching:

• What have I taught and does that match my **area of expertise**

• Have I **supervised graduate projects and Theses** and how effectively?

• Have I engaged myself in **advising students**?

• Have I reflected on data and statements made by students on the evaluation forms?

• Have I upgraded my **courses and course notes**?

  Have I offered any **workshops** or developed any new materials?

  Have I evaluated my **instructional methods** and my effectiveness?

  Have I employed any new instructional methods which might enhance the **students’ learning experience**?

  Do I understand **assessment practices** and can I share evidence that students are learning?

  Am I a recipient of any **teaching awards**?
Self-Reflection Questions in the Area of Research:

Is my research in line with the research priorities of my institution? Does the research I do resonate with the mission statement of the institution?

Am I producing new knowledge? Have I been productive?

Do I have the skills and competencies to produce sound and credible research output?

Have I been publishing? What kind of research outlets? Are they internationally recognized? Are they locally recognized? What kind of research do I do? What impact is my research having on the world of practice or on theory?

Have I secured any grants? In my discipline, are there funding agencies?

What kind of conferences do I go to? Are they internationally refereed? For what purpose do I attend conferences? What is the impact of my participation? Am I sharing my research and its findings with the larger community (faculty, students and industry)?

What kind of resources (support) do I need to help me carry out the type of research I do?

What kind of researcher am I? Am I a leader with sound research ideas? Am I a wagon-rider? Have I collaborated with others?

Am I recipient of any research awards?

Am I contributing to the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning? Is that allowing for a better understanding of today’s learners?
Self-Reflection Questions in the Area of Service:

1. Is service something I am asked to do?

2. What is my contribution to the advancement of:
   - My university
   - My Faculty
     - My department
     - My profession
     - My community

3. Am I involved in curriculum reform?

4. Am I involved in any educational innovation activity?
The Cultural Transformation:

True academicians are owners of their institutions and of their own professional development.

The world of Academia needs educators who are “polyvalent”.

Self-reflection is a life-style, a “constructive accountability” measure.

What are you doing to meet your professional obligations?

Do you have the nerve to look in the mirror?

Do you have the courage to self-assess?