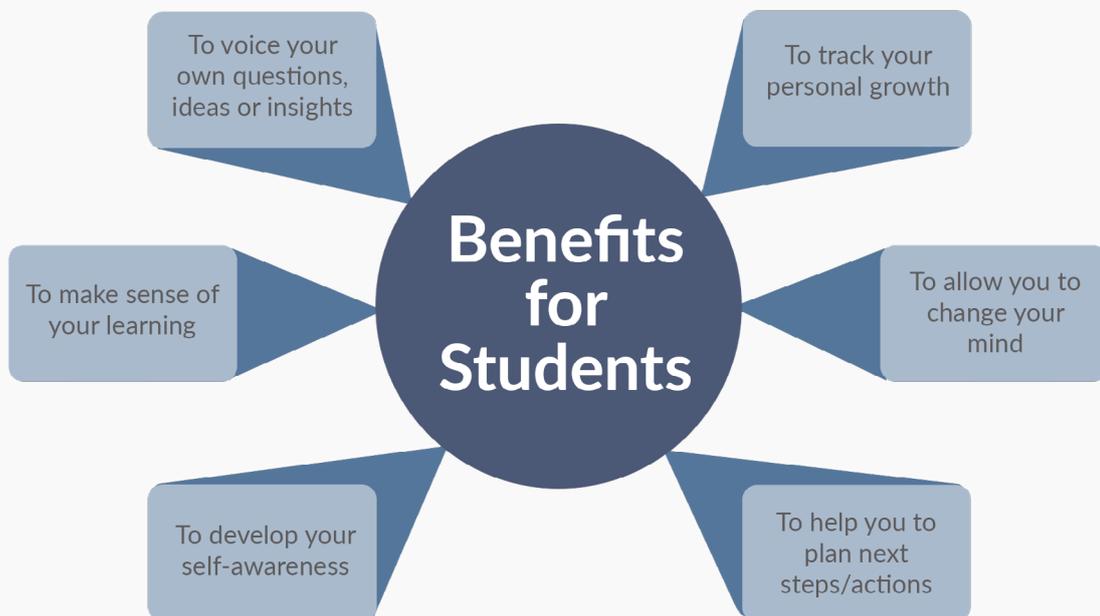


Student reflection in SPHE

In SPHE, one of the most important skills that students develop is the capacity to reflect on their learning and its meaning for them in their lives. Like all skills, reflection takes time and practice to develop. When students are encouraged and supported in reflecting regularly as part of their learning in SPHE the benefits are countless.



HOW?

Reflection can be structured or semi-structured. It can be done individually or with others. It can remain private to the student or it can be used to support conversations with other students and/or the SPHE teacher.

WHEN?

Reflection can happen at the beginning of a topic, during the learning and/or at the end.

WHAT?

Reflection in SPHE is specifically focused on a learning activity or a series of activities. It focuses on two questions;

- **what students are learning** - the insights they are gaining about themselves and others
- **what does this mean for them** - how it will inform their choices, behaviour and relationships?

Student reflection in SPHE

Teacher Advice

- Learning to reflect takes time. Because it is such an important skill, it is worth giving it class time. Dedicate time to reflection in every lesson.
- Talk to your students about why reflection is important. Invite them to recall a time when stopping to reflect helped them. Re-visit this conversation regularly to help students to stay engaged with the reflection process. When students are asked to reflect and left to their own devices, they quickly lose interest.
- Encourage students to complete their reflections using whatever format works for them, e.g a video or voice recording, a handwritten or typed entry to their learning journal, a drawing, a mind map, symbol, a piece of music, a poem.
- The format is not important as long as it helps students to think about what has happened, to look within themselves and to consider how the experience has changed or challenged them – in other words, they can use whatever helps them to reflect.
- Reflection in SPHE is about what learning and insights the students are gaining. However, it should go beyond merely giving a record of information or facts learned and focus on the learning that the student feels really matters and why it matters.
- Reflection can also be about how students are learning and help students become more aware of themselves as learners.
- Consider sharing examples of different kinds of reflection, e.g. visual, video, written. It is important that students have an understanding about what good reflection looks like/sounds like.
- If students share their reflections with you this can provide an opportunity to affirm the young person, to highlight strengths that they may not be aware of and to discuss realistic next steps. Feedback about student reflections should always be given with positive intention.

Prompts to support student reflection

It is important to provide different ways of reflecting to ensure that students do not become bored with the process and to provide students with a variety of prompts to support their reflections, such as those suggested below. Not all these should be used. Just pick a few!

- What I enjoyed most today (or about this topic)...
- What I will remember is...
- What surprised me...
- What I found difficult or challenging...
- What made me think...
- A question I'm left with
- What still puzzles me...
- Something I want to do differently now..
- A new plan or goal I have...
- I know I'm learning in SPHE because...
- I felt during/after this topic
- Do I need to talk to someone? Where can I go for help?
- If I knew then what I know now what advice would I give myself?
- What do I like about learning in SPHE? What would I change?

**We do not learn from experience...
We learn from reflecting on it.**

John Dewey

Student reflection in SPHE

10 ways to support reflection in your classroom

- 1 The 1 minute written reflection**
On the top half of a page, record: *what I learned today?*
On the bottom of the page, record: *a question I am left with or something I am not sure about.*
- 2 The 1 minutes oral reflection**
Turn to a partner and take turns sharing one of these:
The thing I learned today....The skill I developed today....Today was good because....I found today interesting because....
- 3 Exit slips**
At the end of a lesson, invite students to complete Exit Slips in response to a particular reflection question. It is important to respond to students' feedback the next time you meet.
- 4 Reflection circles**
Invite students, sitting in a circle, to share one reflection at the end of class or a topic (some of the prompts on the previous page can be used). Students listen respectfully and can ask questions or comment only if the student sharing is comfortable with that.
- 5 Take a reflection break**
Press pause during classroom activities to periodically allow for 1-2 minutes reflection on what your students are learning and how they are learning.
- 6 Think- pair- share**
Pose a question to students that requires them to think deeply. Allow 30 seconds reflection time. Then they share their reflection with a partner and then with a wider group.
- 7 Sentence stem response**
Use the prompt sentence stems on the previous page to help direct students' reflections
- 8 Twitter reflection**
Students write a reflection in less than 140 characters about what they have learned and what it means for them. These can be written on post-its and attached to a piece of work.
- 9 3- 2 - 1**
At the end of a topic or lesson students reflect on:
3 things I learned
2 things I found interesting
1 thing I will do
- 10 Sketch notes**
For visual learners, invite students to sketch out visually what they consider to be the important things they have learned

Student reflection in SPHE linked to the wellbeing indicators

<p>Active</p> <p>How is my learning in SPHE helping me to become more physically active and healthy?</p>	<p>Resilient</p> <p>How is my learning in SPHE helping me to cope with the normal ups and downs of life and helping me to know where I can go for help, if needed?</p>
<p>Responsible</p> <p>How is my learning in SPHE helping me to make good choices?</p>	<p>Respected</p> <p>How is my learning in SPHE allowing me to feel valued, included and listened to? How am I showing respect and care for others in my class?</p>
<p>Connected</p> <p>How is my learning in SPHE helping me to see how my actions and choices impact not only on my own life but on others too?</p>	<p>Aware</p> <p>How is my learning in SPHE helping me to become more aware of my thoughts, feeling and behaviours? Am I becoming more able to make thoughtful decisions based on my personal values?</p>

A final word

Reflection can be challenging because it involves introspection. If it triggers feelings of upset for any student then you may need to speak to the student afterwards and gently ask about the cause of upset. If you think a student could benefit from further emotional support, use the referral pathways in your school to signpost the student to the appropriate person. Keep in mind that a teacher is obliged to share information with staff members with safeguarding responsibilities if they think any student is at risk.

Further useful resources:

[The Experiential Learning Cycle](#)

[What is Reflective Learning?](#) (3 minute video)

[NCCA, Focus on Learning toolkit; Students Reflecting on their Learning](#) booklet