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Encouraging reflection

How do I encourage students to reflect? Well, I must admit that I talk it big, I talk it up and I am very encouraging about reflection, because otherwise I think students are quite sceptical, they feel as if talking about their own situations and their own experiences is far too subjective and isn't valid evidence for their practice necessarily.

So what I do is I start slowly and I start gently and I really help students understand that telling their stories is a very natural thing that people want to do, so I get students to talk to each other about their experiences and they have great fun doing that.

The hardest stage is about students listening to each other, listening to what is being said, as well as what's not being said and that takes a little bit more time.

And third stage is then asking appropriate questions, questions which are supportive as well as challenging and by challenging I don't mean being critical, I mean helping people to see things differently. So if a question makes you think about something that you haven't thought about before, or think about it in a way in which you haven't thought it before, that's a good challenging question and that's the beginning of real analysis within a reflective cycle.

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