

## *Reflective Process*

Teachers are by nature reflective. We worry about whether a particular lecture or lesson is going to be successful; we fret over reaching this or that student; we ponder how, or when, we can update our materials and curriculum, and we're in a never-ending chase to master technologies that will improve the delivery of our instruction. The problem is some of our best reflections come in our cars on the way to or from school! How many times have we had a great idea but failed to follow-through or even remember it?

The process of reflection formalizes much of what we do naturally as teachers and commits us to positive changes as professionals.

In our "Reflection Sessions" at MATC, we begin by looking at our "MATC Standards of Teaching Excellence," and pondering several questions:

- Which one or two standards do I find to be the most critical to advance MATC's vision of providing "excellence in education to enrich, empower and transform lives in our community"?
- At which standard(s) do I, as an instructor, really excel?
- At which standard(s) do I, as an instructor, need some work?

We then turn to our set of "Reflective Questions" noting how they flow from the Standards of Teaching Excellence, but they ask more pointed questions in each area allowing for more precise thought and reflection.

Finally, we solicit ideas that faculty have for their "Teaching Action Plan." Naturally, most of us have scores of projects and tasks we've been meaning to get to – could those form the basis of an action plan? How might they fit into the "Standards of Teaching Excellence" or "Reflective Questions"? We ask faculty to share some of the challenges they're having in the classroom. What steps might be taken to begin addressing such challenges?

While the process of individual reflection can be extremely helpful, we've also found a great benefit exists to having faculty reflect together, sharing challenges, strengths, and weaknesses, and then brainstorm solutions. Often these sessions lead participants to form PEER Coaching partnerships in which faculty work together to devise strategies and motivate each other to be successful.