Reflection Activity

Observing diversity in your classroom

Think about the classrooms you teach:

Who are your students?
What types of backgrounds do they have?
How many are from the same background as you?
How many are from different cultural, linguistic, ethnic, religious and socio-economic backgrounds?
How do you identify this diversity – in other words, is it “visible”, do you know from conversations, or from comments made in class discussion, etc.?

Think about your estimates:

Are there possibly other types of diversity present in your classroom – such as those that are difficult to “see” (e.g. socio-economic diversity)?
Does your school offer statistics on student backgrounds that can help you to prepare for new classes (of students as well as their parents)?

Such statistics are very useful, but numbers only tell part of the story. For example, knowing that 15% of your students are Asian is helpful, but only to a certain extent – “Asians” come from a large number of countries, each with its own language and culture.

Think about your background:

How might your students experience similar perceptions and experiences?
How might their perceptions and situations differ from your own

If you are from a background different from the majority, think about your own perceptions and experiences regarding diversity in the classroom.

It is worthwhile to request more information and/or formal professional development to become more acquainted with the cultures, especially if your school is made up of predominant groups.

You can also speak with other teachers about their experiences.