



Your background

- Have you demonstrated critical thinking in relation to teaching?
- To what extent is teaching grounded in current policy and research and what is the balance between these?
- How well informed is evaluation and review of practice?

Reflective Practice

- Dominant philosophy or underpinning theory in UK teacher education
- The model to aspire to – the reflective practitioner
- Questions of compatibility with ‘competence’ model

‘Teachers need to be able to integrate the high-quality decision-making of preparation with the low quality decision-making of classroom interaction. To do this, and survive, requires an extensive opportunity to make errors in a supportive situation and an opportunity to improve’ (Furlong et al, 2000, Teacher Education in Transition, p. 42)

High quality and low quality?



Limits of Reflective Practice

- To reflect – to think about
- To be reflective – to be thoughtful
- Reflexivity:
 - challenges questions of explanation, prediction and control;
 - the real world is not an experiment
 - self-inquiry, adaptation, interaction constantly changes the situation
- Reflective practice – organised thinking to inform practice
- Criticisms
 - formulaic
 - just navel-gazing
 - blurred, un-theoretical, superficial thinking
 - rationalisation of existing practice



Reflective Practice and Theory

Armitage, A. *et al* (2007), *Teaching and Training in Post-Compulsory Education*, pp. 13-21,

In place of theory...?

- “Practice is re-presented, however subtly, as theory. Tutors and students then begin to systematize and elaborate a description of their practice and call it ‘theory’” (p. 14)
- Theory – ‘it is a part of the framework through which we understand the world, whether or not it is of immediate practical use’ (p. 14)

Theory as tool to think with

Theory as tool to be remade

Theory as distinctive and valuable in its own right

Theoretical Perspectives

Ruch, G. (2002), From Triangle to Spiral: Reflective Practice in Social Work Education, Practice and Research, *Social Work Education*, Vol. 21, No. 2, pp. 199-216)

- Technical reflection – efficient, effective, measurable outcomes
- Practical reflection – knowledge as relative, constructed, contextual and inter-subjective; openness to practice, alternatives, insight, self and others
- Critical reflection – challenge social, political and structural conditions which are evident and which practice can re-enforce
- Process reflection – unconscious and conscious processes at work; reflect, think, feel and act.

Theoretical Perspectives

Ruch, G. (2002), From Triangle to Spiral: Reflective Practice in Social Work Education, Practice and Research, *Social Work Education*, Vol. 21, No. 2, pp. 199-216)

- Response to competence models – technical-rational, competency-based, managerial, procedural approaches to education and training where there is an emphasis on doing (what is told!).
- Need for a renewed emphasis on connections between believing, thinking, feeling, doing; context and variety, unpredictability, individualisation; complexity and diversity
- **Key implication for practice: recognise that ‘best practice’ is always contextual**



Evidence

Brookhart, S. M. (1991). Grading practices and validity. *Educational Measurement: Issues and Practice*, 10(1), 35-36.

William, D. (2016). Leadership for teacher learning: Creating a culture where all teachers improve so that all students succeed. *West Palm Beach, FL: Learning Sciences International*.

Theoretical Perspectives

Loughran, J. (2002), Effective Reflective Practice: In Search of Meaning in Learning about Teaching, *Journal of Teacher Education*, Vol. 53, No. 1, pp. 33-43.

- Underlying rationale – from thinking about something to defined practices as part of process
- Problem – puzzling, curious, perplexing
- Context, nature of problem, anticipated value of reflection – what is reflected on and for what purpose
- Priority – investigating taken for granted assumptions

Theoretical Perspectives

- A problem is unlikely to be acted on if it is not viewed as a problem (Loughran, 2002, p. 35)
- Rationalisation – ‘the dogged adherence to an approach almost despite the nature of the practice setting because alternative ways of seeing are not (cannot) be apprehended’ (Loughran, 2002, p. 35)
- Other ways of seeing
- Other ways of acting
- **Key implication for practice - peer observation and discussion, contrasting practices.**

Theoretical Perspectives

Mackintosh, C. (1998), Reflection: a Flawed Strategy for the Nursing Profession, *Nurse Education Today*, Vol. 18, pp. 553-557.

- Uncertainty around definition – reflective thinking (Dewey) reflectivity (Mezirow), reflective practice (Schon)
- Uncertainty around practice – diaries, journals, workshops, critical incidents, problem-solving
- 3 major problems:
 - the process by which reflection takes place;
 - the ability of individuals to reflect in a meaningful way;
 - the benefits for practice

‘Reflection, with its emphasis on individual perspectives of events, their interpretation and their analysis, excludes all other viewpoints: those of the multidisciplinary team and, most importantly, the client group, patients or carers who nurses are there to help’ (Macintosh, 1998, p. 556).

Key implication for practice: from individual practice to community of practice

Developing Reflective Practice

Critical Incident

- Regular (sometimes assessed) opportunities to develop reflective practice
- Reflection – discussion – evaluation
- Problematising
- Other perspectives

Critical Incident Method

CRITICAL INCIDENT METHOD



- ‘a systematic, open-ended technique that involves analyzing specific situations to determine which communicative actions or behaviors would lead to the best possible outcome of a given situation.’

- *Simmons, N. (2017). Critical incident method. In M. Allen (Ed.), The sage encyclopedia of communication research methods (pp. 300-302). SAGE Publications, Inc, <https://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781483381411.n111>*

Activity – Critical Incidents

Describe a personal or professional situation you have recently experienced:

1. Describe what happened and explain your perception of the situation
2. What meanings did you bring to the situation, based on previous experiences and thinking?
3. What assumptions did you make about the meaning of the situation?
4. What conclusions did you draw about the experience based upon meanings and assumptions?
5. What other meanings and assumptions could be introduced into your thinking?
6. What actions might result from reflecting upon a broader range of meanings and assumptions?