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What *is* reflective practice?

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Abstract

'Reflective practice' broadly refers to approaches and tools facilitating critical interrogation of professional practice in the social professions, those "whose role it is to work with people who are regarded as in need of support, advocacy, informal education or control" (Banks & Nøhr, 2003, p. 8). Classroom practice of teachers, for example, is perceived as an ongoing interplay of individual, role, craft, context, setting and interpersonal dynamics; an effective practitioner would be one who can consider, critically evaluate and develop these elements. As a result, students on professionally qualifying programmes are increasingly required to engage in reflective practice. Indeed, the significance of reflective practice has grown such that in some countries (such as UK, USA), it is becoming recognized as a significant element of "graduateness" for all students at Higher Education level. This chapter charts the principles and practices encompassed by the term 'reflective practice' with the intention to enable readers to 'map' literature on and experiences of reflective practice.

Key words: Reflective practice, practitioners, concepts, values, reflection-on-action.

1. Introduction

I qualified in the late 1980's as a teacher and Youth and Community Worker[1] in the UK via a four-year undergraduate degree. Discussion of 'reflective practice' that features significantly in current configurations of higher education programmes for 'social professions' did not exist. Yet, its emphasis in literature concerning professional programmes and professions reveals that reflective practice is now embraced in a "wave of euphoria" (Horgan, 2005, p. 33 cited in McGarr & Moody, 2010, p. 580), in the UK, as well as, Ireland, America, and, more recently, Japan. It is particularly prominent in the social professions, those "whose role it is to work with people who are regarded as in need of support, advocacy, informal education or control" (Banks & Nøhr, 2003, p. 8) (so, teaching, nursing, youth work, community work, social work, early years practice, health services). Its significance has grown such that in some countries (e.g. UK, USA), reflective practice is increasingly recognized as significant to engaging at graduate level, referred to as "graduateness", for *all* students of Higher Education level. This chapter, however, will focus on the profession of teaching.

My experience recounted above will in no doubt be due to the notion of reflective practice and its valuing of practice wisdom being conceptualised in the 1980's. Drawing on the earlier work of American philosopher John Dewy, Donald Schön's (1983; 1987) seminal research echoed a particular zeitgeist of the time characterised by the social professions seeking equity with occupational groups that historically had received high status recognition (Gobbi, 1975, cited in Platzer et al., 1997). Timeliness alone, however, cannot account for the rapid growth of reflective practice that sees it now featuring in the ways highlighted (Dohn, 2001; Gergen & Gergen, 2008). Paulo Freire a Brazilian philosopher and educationalist (whose radical contribution has had significant influence in, for example, Asia, Latin America, and the UK) writes that each era "is characterised by a complex of ideas, concepts, hopes, doubts, values and challenges" that are dialectically constituted (1996, p. 82). Given the number of writers that discuss reflective practice in terms that construe it as significant theme in the current era (e.g. Trelfa & Telfer, 2014; Saltiel, 2010; Clegg et al., 2002; Atkinson & Claxton, 2000; Ecclestone, 1996), examining the ideas,

[1] Youth & Community Work is a professional qualification specialising in informal education practices, situated as different to formal education, although teachers will recognise that they use informal approaches in their daily practice too.

concepts, hopes, doubts, values and challenges that underpinning it could serve as a useful way to chart the principles and practices of reflective practice and, in turn, open up a critical discussion. This then is the structure of the deliberation that follows, drawing from literature and, importantly, the perspectives of students engaging with it during their higher education programmes. In this chapter I focus on ideas, concepts, hopes and values and later in this book I develop this analysis to consider doubts and challenges.

The student experience of reflective practice included in this work stems from small-scale research I carried out in 2010 with students and professionally qualified practitioners[2] in two jurisdictions of the UK (Trelfa, 2010); small-scale research in 2014 with a group of students in Japan (Trelfa & Tamai, *ongoing*); and from my continuing current doctorate research (Trelfa, *ongoing*). Participants discuss their espoused and tacit theories of the purposes and practices of reflective practice and some themes are included below[3].

My intention is to support understanding of reflective practice by enabling readers to locate aspects of reflective practice included in subsequent chapters, along with theories from wider reading of literature related to the area, to key dimensions and debates. As such, then, I aim to chart the key tenets of principles and practices of reflective practice and by doing so respond directly to common confusion concerning what, indeed, *is* reflective practice.

2. Ideas

The ideas underpinning reflective practice relate to the nature of professional practice itself. From a reflective practice approach, classroom practice of teachers, for example, is perceived as an ongoing interplay of the individual; interpersonal dynamics and relationship (with students, colleagues, parents, employers); and practice, comprising role, subject knowledge and craft (all informed by professional knowledge, personal/professional experience, and policy) as well as the context they

[2] Where I use the term 'practitioners' it refers to those engaged in the specialist craft and service of particular professions. Sometimes I use the term to distinguish between those individuals who are full time in the workplace to those who are students, i.e. individuals combining fieldwork with university attendance. I also use it in places as a generic term to refer to both. The context for the word will indicate how I am using it.

[3] Names have been changed to protect confidentiality.

are working in, the immediate and broader setting at the time of the reflection. The general idea of reflective practice is that an effective practitioner would be one who can consider, critically evaluate and develop these complex elements; 'reflective practice' refers to an approach that recognises this and tools that facilitate it. Reflective practice can therefore be considered in terms of four specific ideas that contribute to this which are related to: self; relationship; practice; and the overarching approach and tools themselves. These four ideas of reflective practice are now explored in turn.

First, then, practice is understood as never being neutral, and thus it is recognised that every decision, action and intervention is mediated through the person of the practitioner, so their emotions, associations, assumptions, mood, knowledge, understanding, and so forth. Here, then, reflective practice is a process of coming to awareness of these elements in terms of how they influence practice,

> a meaning-making process that moves [an individual] from one experience into the next with deeper understanding of its relationships with and connections to other experiences and ideas (Rodgers, 2002, p. 845).

To this end, reflective practice involves teachers critically unpacking their practice "in ways that that may reconstitute how [they] act and even reshape the very nature of identity itself" (Ferguson, 2003, p. 199) as they question the aspects of self that influenced how they perceived a situation, what they did as a result, and the immediate or longer term outcome or impact. Rodgers & Scott (2008, p. 733) discuss "the psychological shift" involved in the development of this approach, placing self and identity at the centre of becoming and being a teacher. In an earlier paper Rodgers and Raider-Roth (2006, p. 266) explore presence as a part of this, a "state of alert awareness, receptivity and connectedness", that requires self-knowledge, self-regulation, and self-trust.

The second idea related to reflective practice recognises that students are by no means passive or inconsequential in the process of teaching, something that discussion so far could otherwise imply. As McCarron & Savin-Baden (2008, p. 357) observe, students 'respond, contribute and actually impose themselves and their

views'[4] during teaching interaction, in ways that are both subtle and forthright, such that they do (and should) 'shape dynamic and direction'. Reflective practice encourages acknowledgement and awareness of this and thus it is an approach through which teachers can "[engage] in an authentic relationship with students where [they] know and respond with intelligence and compassion to students and their learning" (Rodgers & Raider-Roth, 2006, p. 265-266). In my research (Trelfa, *ongoing*) I posit 'Connected Practice' as having a significant part to play in professional practice, named purposefully in respect of Belenkey et al.'s (1996) concept of 'connected knowing'. Belenkey et al. (1996, p. 101) distinguish between 'understanding' and 'knowledge'. 'Understanding' is "personal acquaintance with an object" involving "*intimacy* and equality between self and object", whilst 'knowledge' is "*separation* from the object and *mastery over it*" [emphasis added]. From here they distinguish between two different "epistemological orientations" regarding the relationship between knowers and objects (1996, p. 102). The first of these, 'connected knowing', is empathic engagement and responsiveness, which can be encapsulated as "response to others in their terms" (Lyons, 1983, p. 134 cited ibid), whilst the second, 'separated knowing' involves objectivity, that is detachment from personal feelings. Applying this to my conceptualisation of professional practice, *Connected Practice* is about the nature of activities a professional engages in with a presumption of aim towards connection as now defined. Thus, the activities of professional practice involved in teaching are not for activity sake, but to create and draw on connection with students.

However, reflective practice also asks that as a result of considering relationships between themselves and their students, and the influence each student has in this, teachers do not deny or ignore their own power. It is a teacher's "professional inquiry" (Shapiro, 2010, p. 312) and the judgements they make and decisions taken that ultimately shape direction, whether these are formal and informal, explicit or implicit. Moreover, power does not only come with role, but also age, gender, race, subculture, personal status, and so forth (Shohet & Hawkins, 1989). Awareness of how this power is manifested and utilised, indeed that it can counteract role power, as well as how it impacts on professional relationships with students and the learning/teaching dynamic, is also important in reflective practice.

[4] Where I use single marks in a quote it indicates that I am maintaining argument flow by removing incidental words and changing tense whilst still attributing the point to the original author.

The third idea underpinning reflective practice relates to the nature of practice itself and is clearly intrinsic to the ideas of 'self' and 'relationship' already discussed. Having tracked the contentious history and ongoing debate around 'profession' and therefore what it to be profession*al*, Evetts (2003, p. 397) defines it as the "structural, occupational and institutional arrangements for dealing with work associated with the uncertainties of modern lives in risk societies". Thus he highlights the unpredictability of professional practice, significantly highlighting 'uncertainty' and 'risk' as characteristics of daily work. Whilst teaching practices can be mundane and routine, it was Donald Schön's (1987) research focus on uncertainty and risk as being distinct to the lifeworld of professionals that lead to his conceptualisation of reflective practice. His interest was on the implications for a practitioner and their practice given that in such situations there are no specific formulae or blueprints to be relied on or referred to; traditional notions of knowing based on an assumption of unproblematic, linear application of theory no longer work. To this end, Banks & Nøhr (2003, p. 13) underscore the inherent ethical and moral activity involved instead, thus how moral sensitivity, judgement, motivation and character is at the heart of reflective practice. Development of such capacity, then, needs to be embedded in professional education programmes and professional practice, and is met through engagement in reflective practice.

Moreover, consideration of moral sensitivity, judgement, motivation and character become more complicated as the societies in which teachers operate have become more complex. Philippart (2003, p. 70) highlights the way that "conflicting interests, interpretations of reality, moral and ethical standards, visions and hopes for the future exist next to each other". If ever moral and ethical activity and the implications for those engaging in it could have been straightforward, it certainly is not now and thus it can be argued that discussions concerning this third idea of reflective practice have become increasingly important.

Drawing on the work of Martin Buber (1970), Rodgers & Raider-Roth (2006) discuss these three underpinning ideas of reflective practice in terms of 'I' (the person of the teacher) and 'Thou' (the persons of the students) (as well as 'It', the subject matter being taught, here implicitly included as part of consideration of the activity of teaching).

The fourth and final idea of reflective practice to be considered refers to the fact that in order to act in the complex, dynamic, "stream-of-consciousness flow[s]" (Lyle, 2002, p. 212) of professional practice, much of the elements involved in a teacher's actions are necessarily unconscious, they are tacit and implicit rather than known and explicit (Argyris & Schön, 1974; Polyani, 1958). As such, individuals "cannot immediately explicate full justificatory grounds for what they are doing, and they are not aware of the pattern of their activities" (Dohn, 2011, p. 674). The final idea underpinning reflective practice, then, is that for as long as the elements remain tacit, teaching practices risk becoming dysfunctional, out-dated, inappropriate and/or entrenched. The tools of reflective practice enable the space, time, commitment and activity involved to bring the elements to conscious awareness. As Moffat (1996, p. 53) poses, through reflective practice a professional practitioner is enabled to

> become aware of that which they know through practice but also [bring] forward this knowledge in a manner that it can be considered for inquiry and critique.

Within literature on reflective practice, substantial attention is devoted to the form or shape of activities can or should take in order to facilitate the approach; Bleakley (1999) discusses this in terms of an overarching developmental epistemology dominating the body of work. Predominantly it is characterised by tools associated with activities of writing (diaries, journals, logs, portfolios, blogs) and dialogue (supervision, action learning sets, reflective practice groups, peer supervision), typically with an expectation or requirement that practitioners engage with whichever of these are deemed as significant. Although there can be a number of purposes for, and intended outcomes, from such engagement (Moon, 1999), common to them all is the involvement of qualities of vulnerability, disclosure, and candour. Thus, it argued at essence of the practice of reflective practice is one can "only reintegrate at the end and … only be disorientated at the beginning" (Cranton, 2006, p. 59).

In sum, it can be seen that essentially the ideas underpinning reflective practice involve what it *means* to be a professional; the principles and values that underlie practice; and both of these in conjunction with the extent to which they are or not determined 'from above' (Evetts, 2003) (by bureaucratic, ideological and/or state

control). Reflective practice, with its focus on responsibility, autonomy and interpretation, is an important 'from within' (Evetts, 2003) counter-balance, or indeed 'opposing force' (Furlong, 2000). Specifically, then, reflective practice supports and encourages: professional decision making, action and intervention; promotes the unpacking and understanding of practice, policy, and the relational dynamic of these in the classroom as well as the relational dynamic with students; and, values and promotes professional practice as an important way of knowing and being.

Whilst different theories of reflective practice emphasize some ideas highlighted here and leave others out, or give differing priority and weight to all of them (D'Cruz et al., 2007; Bleakley, 1999), the overarching idea of reflective practice is that it offers an alternative paradigm, a "new epistemology of practice" (Newman, 1999, p. 146), one that explores and posits a model for what practitioners do in professional practice, and by "[rejecting] linear thinking as the primary mode for professional problem solving and knowledge building" (Papell & Skolnik, 1992, p. 20), positively acknowledges and raises the status of the craft involved.

3. Concepts

Within the context of its popularity but specifically to answer the question 'What *is* reflective practice?' I am borrowing from Freire to see it as core theme in the current era and his suggestion that as such it can therefore be explored via its *ideas*, *concepts, hopes* and *values*. Having explored the *ideas* underpinning reflective practice, focus now turns to its key *concepts.*

Professional programmes, teaching practices and literature concerning reflective practice are typically infused with particular concepts, 'reflective practice' being one them, often used interchangeably, and often without recognition of how they might be the same or different. The concepts of 'reflection', 'reflective practice' (plus 'critical reflective practice'), 'reflection-on-action' (or '-on-practice'), 'reflection-in-action' (or –'in-practice'), and 'reflexivity', are discussed here.

3.1 Reflection

Described by Boud et al. (1985) as a process whereby we return to an original

experience, attend to the feelings, and re-evaluate the experience, reflection is clearly an important element within metacognition, so higher order thinking. Higher order thinking is critical in learning as it allows for

> the active monitoring and consequent regulation and orchestration of [information processing activities]…usually in service of some concrete goal or objective (Flavell, 1976, p. 232).

Literature on metacognition illuminates the significance of reflection, debates an association between reflection and intelligence (e.g. Sternberg, 1986; Borkowski et al., 1987; Merriam, 2004) and attempts to identify and understand the different elements involved in the process of reflection and knowledge generation. For example, in *Knowledge and Human Interests* (1968/1971) Jürgen Habermas, a profoundly significant philosopher and sociologist, begins to elucidate his critical social theory in which he locates reflection as being central to people understanding their environments, interactions and interpretations. Moreover, he links the role of reflection to emancipation, the power of reflection to subvert intransigence, coercion and domination. In later work, Habermas (1981/1984; 1981/1987) proposes the importance of a 'performative attitude' whereby meaning is only properly understood through awareness of one's active role in its construction, something that can only be determined and expressed through the medium of language (or "communicative action"). To be able to engage in this he argues the case for commitment to an ongoing process of reflection. This treatise, along with that of Schön as mentioned above, was influenced by the earlier writing of John Dewey. Dewey (1933/1991, p. 6) describes 'reflective thought' as

> Active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it, and the further conclusion to which it tends.

Here, then, experience as a construct and reflection are articulated as integral to each other (Gould & Taylor, 1996). In sum, then, *reflection* is the central process involved in learning from experience and making meaning in a social world.

Interest in reflection has led to research regarding its role in learning, specifically *how* people learn from their experiences, for example, Kolb (1984), Burnard (1991), Boud et al. (1985). Others, such as Brookfield (1987), Kemmis (1985), Mezirow (1990) essentially follow Dewey's metaphor of reflection being 'climbing a tree to get a more commanding view of a situation' (1933/1991, p. 11) as they examine the relationship of critical thinking and experience. Jenny Moon (1999, p. 5), for example, describes critical thinking as "a means of transcending more usual patterns of thought to enable the taking of a critical stance or an overview".

Reflection, then, relates to a way of thinking or an approach to thinking, approached variously as a 'natural' capacity and/or a learned skill to refine but clearly something to possess that can enhance the way one engages with experiences.

3.2 Reflective practice

Reflection as a *practice*, so *reflective practice*, is understood as a "specialised tool" for professionals (Moon, 1999, p. 4) and relates to 'performance in professional settings and preparation and unpacking to improve' (Schön, 1983, p. 60). Thus, in contrast to 'merely' reflecting, I offer reflective practice is characterised as a rigorous, disciplined approach for noticing, attending to, and inquiring into aspects of practice, where 'practice' is understood as meaning a "sequence of actions undertaken by a person to serve others" (Argyris & Schön, 1974, p. 6). The inclusion of the word 'practice' therefore indicates a conceptualisation of it as disciplined craft aimed towards service to others, one that entails the repertoire of skills outlined earlier as part of *Ideas*. Generally, then, within teaching and its professionally qualifying programmes it is

> recognised that a profession will be the stronger if its practitioners are used to plan, to execute, to accept responsibility for, and to critically evaluate their actions (Barnett, 1990, p. 76).

Perhaps as a way to distinguish between teachers who reflect and those who engage in reflective practice we can draw on Adams et al. (2002) and Burgoyne & Reynolds (1997). These writers contrast '*effective* practitioners' with '*reflective* practitioners'. In brief, the terms distinguish between practitioners who merely think about the information they have received from the situation, context and their personal

influence, with practitioners who consider how they made and might make sense of it all to develop or better understand their teaching practices. For example, Cowan (1998, p. 17) writes about reflective practitioners as learners who

> analyse or evaluate one or more personal experiences and attempt to generalise from that thinking. They do this so that in the future, they will be more skilful or better informed or more effective, than they have been in the past.

This said, some theories are constructed around a further concept, that of *critical reflection*. How, or if this is different to *reflective practice* is not always made clear, and readers will find this discussion useful to determine that for themselves in the future. However, Kim (1999) and Burgoyne & Reynolds (1997), for instance, discuss it in terms of critical and emancipatory connections being made, whilst in their conceptualisations *reflective practice* does not involve this. Burgoyne & Reynolds (1997, p. 2) write, for example, that a critically reflective practitioner is informed by

> a rich and diverse mixture of descriptive, interpretative and critical theories and also an understanding of a range of rival normative theories to a preferred one.

For a number for a number of others (e.g. Bolton, 2010; Proctor, 1993; Thompson & Thompson, 2008), myself included, this is an unnecessary layer of categorisation. I contend all reflective practice should sit within a frame of critical and emancipatory connections, which is not the same as suggesting that every time a teacher engages in reflective practice it will hold such significant potential for transformation, just that this is the broader container for the endeavour. In general terms, however, an epistemology of transformation may not always be present in theories and accounts of reflective practice, and where present it can be explicit or implicit and given different priority or weight to other aspects (Bleakley, 1999).

3.3 Reflection-in, and -on, –action.

Recalling that Schön's (1987, p. 6) inquiry pivoted on the way in which professionals engage with "indeterminate zones of practice", those that present a practitioner with

unique dynamics, uncertainty and value dilemmas, his focus, then, was on what he called the "swampy lowland where situations are confusing 'messes' incapable of technical solution" (1983, p. 42). He contrasted this with the "high ground" where issues and decisions are manageable and can be solved or resolved through prescribed technique and guidelines. Encountering such situations, Schön (1983, p. 50) posited that practitioners reflect "on the understandings which have been implicit" in their 'actions and understandings' through a process comprising the elements of 'surface, criticize, restructure and embody in further action'. They do this in two ways, through reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action. The former means teachers "think about doing something while doing it" (1983, p. 54), so in "a stretch of time within which it is still possible to make a difference to the outcomes of action (Schön, 1995, np), whilst the latter is described as:

> in the relative tranquillity of a post-mortem, they think back on a project they have undertaken, a situation they have lived through, and they explore the understandings thy have bought to their handling of the case. (Schön, 1983, p. 61).

Under the overarching *Idea* of a teacher 'learning to plan, execute, accept responsibility for, and critically evaluate their actions' (Barnett, 1990, p. 76), the overwhelming weight of attention in literature and professional programmes is on *reflection-on-action*. It is done so with the intention that it will enhance teaching practices in the moment, facilitated through the activities of writing and dialogue emphasised above.

3.4 Reflexivity

The final concept to be discussed here which appears in literature and professional programmes in relation to reflective practice is *reflexivity*. Whilst Fook (2002) suggests reflexivity it is fundamentally no different to *'reflective practice'* but has simply evolved in parallel to mean the same in different disciplines (education and social work [reflexivity] rather than engineering and management [reflective practice], D'Cruz et al (2007) distinguish between them according to generalisability. They discuss reflexivity as a critical stance and location of self, whilst reflective practice concerns "[generating] theory from one incident that is generalizable to other incidents and situations" (2007, p. 83). Nevertheless, others, such as Bolton

(2010), Proctor (1993) and Thompson & Thompson (2008, p. 27) argue that an approach to reflective practice that does *not* adopt the former "would produce poor-quality practice, and, in some respects dangerous practice". This is a view that I am in accord with, seeing no distinction between them, thus, like discussion around *'critical reflection'* above, approach them as different labels for the same concept.

Whilst this brief discussion of *concepts* offers a way to chart relevant terms used in literature and their meanings, it also highlights "blurring" (D'Cruz et al., 2007, p. 74) between them which in turn creates confusion and ambiguity, a "chaotic catalogue" (Moon, 1999, p. 3) of "*multiple* meanings" (Dohn, 2011, p. 671) [emphasis added]. With this in mind it is perhaps not surprising that a key theme arising in student narratives concerning reflective practice from research identified in the introduction to this chapter pivots around 'Getting It', so struggling to understand what it is. For instance, after three years of study and looking back on her experience of reflective practice, students in the UK, such as Michelle, speak of struggling to understand how to do *"it properly, what it's meant to do, what purpose it's meant to serve"*. Jade, who is also at the end of her programme says

> *I didn't really understand it, well it's something I've always done, I thought it was something I just done, like I've always done it since I was a little girl and I didn't realise how important it was.*

Mel, a new student, talks about hoping to be better at reflective practice to *"understand it more"* and *"know more about it",* as if it is like any other content area of a higher education programme that she will be introduced to, such as sociology, or psychology, that she needs to learn. These themes are also reflected by the students in Japan along with a further dimension related to the specific course of study they are taking. They write their reflective journals in a different language such that Miki explains how it enables her to develop her skills in that area and thus for her this is the purpose of reflective practice. In all the research projects there is discussion about *"not doing it",* so not engaging in reflective practice once their higher education programmes are complete and they have moved into full-time post-qualifying employment. Whilst all of this could be interpreted as instrumental to a process involved in coming to appreciate (or not) the value and significance of reflective practice where previously it was an activity taken for granted or not fully

understood, further attention to the student narratives shows this is not the way they are thinking about it. Rather than reflective practice being making meaning and creating or drawing on 'professional knowledge' (Eraut, 1994), Michelle states that *"things don't always happen"* that she can reflect on and Mel says that *"sometimes I've not got anything to reflect on",* again echoed in the interview with students in Japan. It is as if there are empty periods that do not fit a notion of significant, worthy or correct things to reflect on, a confusion to which the unclear *concepts* would obviously contribute to. In Japan, Namika asks *"Is reflective practice something you just do on your own?*

She explains that she finds peer support and conversation useful and therefore when the course has ended and she is no longer part of such a community she will not continue with reflective practice. This suggests that not only do the *concepts* create confusion but the activities stemming from them do as well, something explored further in my next chapter. For as long as *concepts* are unclear then reflective practice will remain a problem for teachers and student teachers trying to engage in it, as well as for programme staff who carry out assessments based on them (Ixer, 1999; D'Cruz et al., 2007). This said, the student narratives around 'Getting It' could be perceived as an articulation of poor introduction to/facilitation of reflective practice experienced as part of their study at university. Whilst this could be an interpretation had they been on one set of programmes, the shared experience across different countries (Japan and UK), and expressed in different higher education institutions (Trelfa & Telfer, 2014) suggests instead that there are vital issues at the heart of 'doing' and 'using' reflective practice (Trelfa, 2010; Trelfa & Telfer, 2014).

4. Hopes

An excavation of reflective practice that draws on Freire's notion of *ideas* and *concepts* begins to surface problems and issues to explored later in this book in terms of *doubts* and *challenges* (cf. Freire), but it also underscores the *hopes* involved in reflective practice as well. It is hoped that through engaging in reflective practice, teachers will understand and develop their responses to classroom situations, become aware of choices available to them, articulate and generate knowledge, and understand all this as being "contingent and fallible" (D'Cruz et al., 2007, p. 81) rather than certain and fixed. The individual 'variations' (D'Cruz et al., 2007) that have been identified will be featured to a greater or lesser extent and in various way in

theories and experience of reflective practice, or indeed may not present at all (Bleakley, 1999). Given the confusion this causes one could posit that practitioners are being asked to take a "leap of faith" (Trelfa, 2005) and embrace (or at least engage with) the *hopes* of reflective practice. They are asked to 'believe' that reflective practice is significant to being an effective teacher despite "question marks over the rigor of the concept[s]" (Clegg et al., 2002, p. 131) and their own disorientation. To respond and hopefully address this, as part of the developmental epistemology discussed earlier, literature, professional programmes and supervisors typically offer models and proformas aligned to the activities highlighted above to enable them to take that leap of faith and engage with reflective practice. Models and proformas bring their own issues, discussed further in my chapter later in this publication, but they can also be instrumental in helping a practitioner to at least attempt involvement with what otherwise can clearly be a minefield.

5. Values

In charting the principles and practices encompassed by the term 'reflective practice' via an examination of it as a theme in the current era what also emerges is the *values* that underpin and characterise it, or, more accurately, a number of value dimensions, open to debate, that are variously implicitly and explicitly expressed in theories of reflective practice.

These can be considered in terms of control, so who controls professions such as teaching, their professionals and the practice they engage in; the *kind/s* of professionals that are wanted; and the kind/s of *practic*e wanted in formal education settings.

Illumination can be provided here by drawing on the work of French philosopher Gilles Deleuze. Rather than considering 'how *should* one live', which would involve complying with, obeying or accepting the ways of conceptualising and approaching life (in our case, practice), Deleuze explores "how we might think of things in ways that open up new regions" instead (May, 2005, p. 3). To this end, he contrasts existing in "narrow, fixed and stable ways" (Gale & Wyatt, 2009, p. 8) with "lines of flight" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987) created by 'curiosity and questioning accepted discourses and practice' (Gale & Wyatt, 2009, p. 8). Deleuze & his colleague Felix

Guattari (1987, p. 415) discuss this in terms of 'striated' (or limited, channelled and partitioned off) space in contrast to 'smooth' space, wherein there are "gaps, detours, subterranean passages, stems, openings, traits, holes" through which what flows cannot be 'cut' or 'hemmed in'. Thus it could be argued that the platform on which the value dynamics of control and the kind of practitioners and practice that are wanted are expressed consists of a dialogue around striated and/or smooth space. This can be seen in theories of reflective practice as well as professional qualifying programmes and practitioner experiences of engaging in reflective practice. Deleuze and Guattari (1987, p. 369) discuss how engaging in 'smooth space' involves "legwork" (so effort) and a process that is 'difficult and uncertain' (1987, p. 480), but neither of these are straight forward in complex and fast-flowing professional practice contexts that are already 'difficult and uncertain' and require effort. This is overlaid with further complexity in education, whether teaching or higher education, where emphasis is increasingly on fixed and prescribed learning outcomes as well as uncontroversial evidence of pass or fail. Interestingly, the value here that can be useful to an understanding of reflective practice come also from Deleuze & Guattari (1987, p. 370) when they liken 'smooth space' to 'escaping a force of gravity'. The *challenge* of this to teachers (as well as educators of student teachers) are explored in the later chapter, but in summary here, borrowing from Deleuze, the notions of striated and smooth space offer a useful stage on which to better appreciate the value dimensions encompassed within the approach and practice of reflective practice.

6. Conclusion

Noticing that reflective practice has become widely embraced in social professions such as teaching, and that the practice of reflective practice has become prolific in profession al higher education programmes for teachers, has lent to it being seen as a key theme in the current era (cf. Freire). In this vein, the articulation of its *ideas*, *concepts*, *hopes*, and ultimately *values*, has helpfully provided a frame through which to chart the principles and practices of reflective practice. My aim in doing this has been to enable readers to locate the theories they read and their experiences of reflective practice, thus contributing to their understanding of what is clearly a complex, if not confusing, approach and set of tools. In sum, I contend that embracing reflective practice as part of a 'wave of euphoria' is insufficient if one is expecting or hoping for engagement; excavation and exploration of reflective practice, what is meant by it and what it involves, is both necessary and essential.

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