# What is Reflective Teaching?




## Dewey's Contribution

### Reflective Action

- That which involves active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or practice in light of the reasons that support it and further consequences to which it leads
- Not a series of steps or procedures to be used by teachers
- A holistic way of meeting and responding to problems
- Involves intuition, emotion, and passion

### Integral Attitudes

#### Openmindedness

- An active desire to listen to more sides than one, to give full attention to alternative possibilities, and to recognize the possibility of error even in beliefs that are dearest to us
  - It seems to me that fresh teachers have a tendency (as a generalization) to be more open-minded when compared to some of the more mature teachers I've seen in schools who have tried many strategies and formed opinions from those experiences.

#### Responsibility

- Involves careful consideration of the consequences to which an action leads
- Involves thinking about at least three kinds of consequences of one's teaching
  - Personal consequences: the effects of my teaching on student self-concepts
  - Social and political consequences: the projected effects of my teaching on the life chances of various students
  - Academic consequences: the effects of my teaching on students' intellectual development

#### Wholeheartedness

- Involves continually striving to understand your own teaching and the way in which it impacts your students
  - I consistently ask myself, "What is my purpose here and what do I expect my students to learn from it?"

### The process of reflection for teachers begins when they experience a difficulty, troublesome event, or experience that cannot be immediately resolved.

- Puzzles of Practice: what Hugh Munby and Tom Russell refer to this as
- Can be in the midst of an action or after it is completed
  - During student teaching, I felt like I was consistently confronted with experiences that fell under this category. It was great to be able to discuss these with my cooperative teacher, such as the behavior of a given student during a lesson and how it could be better handled in the future.

## Schon's Contributions

### Reflection-in-action

- The process of understanding and improving one's own teaching must start from reflection on one's own experience, rather than simply from the experience or research of others
  - This is where in student teaching I was able to daily reflect upon my teaching and and it's effectiveness to find ways to continually improve it. It was one of the first times that I was truly able to do more than simply rely upon the research conducted in the program at Regis.
- Occurs before a lesson when you plan for and think about your lesson and after instruction when you consider what occurred

### Reflection-in-action

- Occurs while you are teaching as you attempt to adjust your instruction to take into account these reactions
  - I agree with Schon's view of how the problems of the "swampy lowlands" do not align with those of the high ground. I believe that theories should be generated and practiced in schools, not all in universities alone.
- Framing and solving problems on the spot

### Appreciative Systems

- Actions, understandings, and judgements that we know how to carry out spontaneously
- Repertoires of values, knowledge, theories, and practices brought to the experiences through which practitioners interpret and frame (appreciate) their experiences

### Reframing

- During and/or after our actions, we reinterpret and reframe our situation on the basis of the experience in trying to change it
  - The familiar process in which an event over which we have puzzled for some time is suddenly seen differently and in a way that suggests new approaches to the puzzle
  - This is similar to our "puzzles of practice" that we are conducting for the Capstone course, as well as consistently throughout or teaching experiences

## Handal & Lauvas' Contributions

### Teachers' practical theories

#### Personal experiences

- The personal experience that teachers bring to a situation, which can potentially inform their work in the present
  - The experiences I had before I entered the teacher education program at Regis, those encountered through field experience, and my work experience as a substitute teacher and student teacher
- An "experiential" basis for teachers' practical theories
- The "stuff" to which we refer when we think about how we want to teach

#### Transmitted knowledge

- In addition to what we directly experience ourselves, we also pick up and use other people's knowledge and understandings
  - watching others act
  - listening to and talking to others
  - reading books
  - watching films
  - living in particular cultures and subcultures
  - listening to my professors at Regis and cooperative teachers
  - reading my textbooks about the foundations and methodology of teaching
- Includes concepts, categories, theories, and commonly held beliefs that are transmitted to us by persons, the media, and the world around us
  - I am continuously examining why I do the things I do in the classroom, and I am amazed at how often I engage in a certain activity/task because I believe it's what I am supposed to do as a teacher, based upon my experience with teachers.

#### Can be interpreted as:

- Rules
  - External knowledge interpreted as prescriptions or rules for practice
- Evidence
  - External knowledge is used as evidence to help teachers accept, reject, and/or modify their existing beliefs based on their assessment of the external knowledge in light of their own experience and values
- Schemata
  - External knowledge used as organizing framework that can help reflective teachers grasp in descriptive and explanatory ways certain aspects of their work that were previously unaccessible
  - Johnson & Johnson's concept of goal structure

#### Core values

- The values that we have about what is good and bad in life and in education
  - These affect how we interpret and react to our experiences and how we look at and examine transmitted knowledge and, as a result, affect how we teach and interact with students and colleagues.
  - Handal & Lauvas argue that our values have a dominating but not singular effect on structuring our practical theories because we interpret everything through the lens provided by them
    - I see my values affect my teaching consistently. Everything I do in the classroom is filtered through what I believe is right and wrong. When dealing with parents, I remember that I value the well-being of my students above all else, even if it means becoming unpopular with a parent.

### 3 Levels of Practice

- P1: Action
  - The teacher walks into the classroom, gives assignments, explains, asks questions, monitors work, and evaluates
- P2: Planning and reflection
  - The planning and reflection where teachers consider why they do what they do in the classroom
- P3: Ethical and moral considerations
  - When teachers about the moral and ethical basis of their actions and raise questions about how or if their actions contribute to a caring classroom environment or to the enhancement of equity and justice

## Reflective Teachers:

### Reflective teachers are self-regarding

- take their own reasoning processes as part of their field of inquiry
- I try to be conscious of my assumptions, logic, choices, priorities, and conclusions. This is still a work-in-progress, as I occasionally assume that my students know more than they do on a given subject. It is then my responsibility to change my approach. It is not their downfall.

### Reflective teachers look at ends as well as means

- Reflective teachers explore, investigate, and grow
- I ask myself, "How can I do this better?"
- ponder how my decisions will affect the lives of the children I teach
- I also ask myself, "Why do I do this?"

### Reflective teachers are open to the individuality of students

- Reflective teachers allow for divergence and technological change
- recognize that the social process of education is also personal, and that it cannot be coerced from others, but must be chosen by them

### Reflective teachers are patient

- know that it takes time for ideas to be developed, delineated, and evaluated
- Reflective instruction may take days, weeks, or years to achieve its purpose
  - This is a great area for me to focus on not being perfect. I have already learned a great deal of patience with myself and my students, and I aim to only increase this going forward.

### Reflective teachers are purposeful and active

- initiate instruction cognizant of the needs of the students as expressed through their experience
- aim instruction toward actions or convictions that resolve the questions, tensions, and perplexities that initiated the student's process of inquiry

### Reflective teachers are active in formulating the purposes and ends of their work

- taking part in curriculum development and being involved in school change efforts
- I try to model for my students how I celebrate my own individuality so that they might learn to celebrate the individuality of themselves and others.

### Reflective teachers are open to the individuality of students

### Reflective teachers are sympathetic to the interests, needs, and insights of the students.

- This is something that I believe can only be achieved through open communication with one's students. I am always looking for and creating opportunities for my students to share with me.

## Traditions of Reflective Teaching

### Academic

#### Reflection about subject matter and the representation and translation of subject matter knowledge to promote understanding

- Teachers reflect mostly about the content of what they are teaching.
- The primary tradition from where the standards for assessing the adequacy of their teaching are derived

#### "Knowledge Growth in Teaching Project"

- Subject matter or content knowledge
- Curriculum knowledge
- Pedagogical content knowledge
- Representation
  - The process through which academic content is transformed
  - Involves thinking through key ideas in the text or lesson and identifying the alternative ways of representing them to students

### Social efficiency

#### The application of knowledge produced by research conducted elsewhere

- Contemporary advocates believe that teachers should focus their reflections on how well their own practice matches what this external research says they should be doing
  - I think that it's important to be in-tune with current research, but I believe it all needs to be taken into the classroom and viewed through a filter.
  - I had several students in my class who would have failed entirely if I had only provided an education based upon where they should have naturally developed. Instead, I looked at each student and modified instruction to either challenge or supplement those who needed it.

### Developmentalist

#### Vito Perrone's 3 central metaphors:

- The natural development of the learner provides the basis for determining what should be taught to students and how it should be taught
- Teacher as a naturalist
- Teacher as a researcher
- Teacher as an artist

#### Reflection about students, their cultural and linguistic backgrounds, thinking and understandings, their interests, and their developmental readiness for particular tasks

#### Eleanor Duckworth's constructivist view

- Emphasizes engaging learners with phenomena, instead of explaining things to them at the onset.
- Teachers should use their knowledge of their students' understandings to decide the appropriate next steps for their learning

### Social reconstructionist

#### Reflection viewed as a political act that either contributes toward or hinders the realization of a more just and humane society

- The teacher's attention is focused both inwardly at his/her own practice and outwardly at the social conditions in which these practices are situated
- Whose knowledge and who's point of view is represented in the curriculum knowledge in my classroom?
- How does the culture of my classroom compare to the cultures of the homes from which my students come?
  - A good majority of this was my cooperative teacher's, but this is a question I hope to be aware of when organizing my own classroom.
  - As a substitute teacher, I feel like I've seen examples of classroom cultures that seem to align as well as cultures that are so unique to the diversity of the students in the room.
- Reflection is about issues of equity and social justice that arise in and outside of the classroom and on connecting the teacher's practice to social continuity and change
- Emphasis is on creating communities of learning where teachers can support and sustain each other's growth

### Generic

#### Encourages reflection about our teaching in general

- Pays little attention to how we reflect, what the reflection is about, or the degree to which our reflections should involve an examination of the social and institutional contexts in which they work
- Assumes the belief that teachers' actions are necessarily better just because they are more deliberate and intentional
- Can be done well or poorly and can be considered more or less successful depending on the substance of the teacher's goals
- The authors believe this often can lack both substance and direction

## Dimensions of Reflection

1. Reflection-in-action / Rapid reflection
   - Teachers reflect immediately and automatically while they are acting
2. Repair
   - Thoughtful reflection-in-action
     - There is a quick pause for thought, rather than immediate reflection
3. Review
   - Less formal reflection-on-action at a particular point in time
     - Teachers think about or talk over such things as the progress of a particular student or groups of students, or the development of curriculum units and, as a result, existing plans may be modified
4. Research
   - More systematic reflection-on-action over a period of time
     - The process of collecting information about one's teaching may involve a matter of weeks or months, although the process of changing plans for actions as a result of this analysis remains the same
     - The teacher's thinking and observation become more systematic and sharply focused around particular issues
5. Retheorizing and Reformulating
   - Long-term reflection-on-action informed by public academic theories
     - Reflection is more abstract and rigorous and takes place over a space of months or years
     - While a reflective teacher is critically examining his/her practical theories, he/she is also considering these theories in light of public academic theories

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