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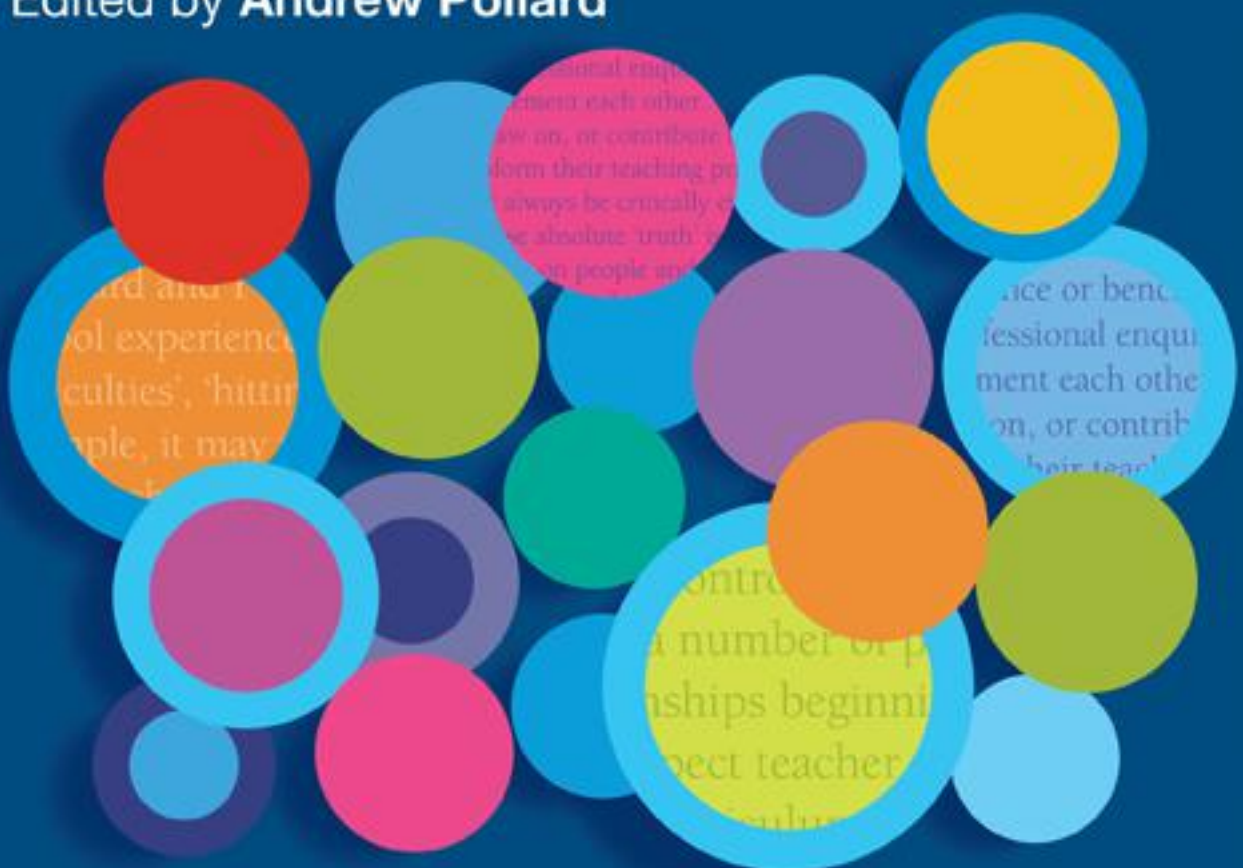
reflective teaching second edition

readings for reflective teaching in schools

Edited by **Andrew Pollard**



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in schools

2nd edition

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Contents

Part three Teaching for learning

Acknowledgements

The most important issue which editors face is, 'What should be included?'. I have worried away at this for several years, and imposed on a large number of people in exploring possible selections for various chapters.

I've had a great deal of advice from colleagues in Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and England who participated in consultation meetings or completed a questionnaire on the content of this volume. I learned too from an all-Ireland teacher education (SCOTENS) event. Additionally, particular thanks go to the Editorial Board for the *Reflective Teaching for Schools* textbook, who offered advice on many selections. They are: Kristine Black-Hawkins, Gabrielle Cliff Hodges, Pete Dudley, Mary James, Holly Linklater, Sue Swaffield, Mandy Swann, Fay Turner, Paul Warwick, Mark Winterbottom and Mary Anne Wolpert (all Cambridge). Editors of other textbooks in the Reflective Teaching series also commented helpfully on the selection – Paul Ashwin (Lancaster), Jen Colwell (Brighton), Yvonne Hillier (Brighton) and Maggie Gregson (Sunderland).

My thanks go also to former colleagues in three Yorkshire schools and at Oxford Polytechnic, University of the West of England, University of Bristol, University of Cambridge and at the Institute of Education, University of London, who have significantly influenced my understanding of teaching and learning over the years. They too may find that echoes in this book.

The administrative complexity of preparing the manuscript and obtaining permissions has been very considerable. This was helped along by Becky Plant and Chris Ellingham. I am also extremely grateful to Frances Arnold, Ally Baker, Kasia Figiel, Rosie Pattinson and their colleagues at Bloomsbury for their contributions and advice on many occasions.

We would of course like to thank all the publishers, editors and other publishers' representatives, both in the UK and overseas, who were kind enough to grant permission for material to be reprinted. Some provided exceptional levels of support in respect of multiple readings and in this respect we acknowledge the generosity of IOE Press, Routledge, SAGE and Bloomsbury. A listing of permissions for the reproduction of extracts is formally provided at the end of the book. Attempts to trace permission holders have been sustained, though a very few cases remain where replies to our enquiries have not yet been received. Any enquiries on such matters should be sent, in the first instance, to the Permissions Manager at Bloomsbury Academic.

Finally, we would like to thank all the authors whose work features in this book – and apologise to the many other researchers and educationists whose high quality material does not! Some, of course, may be delighted to have escaped, for word-length constraints have occasionally forced detailed editing. I offer sincere apologies if any authors feel that their work has suffered in that process.

Having reviewed a wide range of publications for possible inclusion in this book, we remain enormously impressed by the richness of research and thinking which is available to teachers, mentors and trainee teachers. The collection can be seen as a representation of the work of several generations of educational researchers – though, even with so many readings, it has not been possible to include all the excellent material which is available. In a sense though, the book remains a collective product and I would like to pay tribute to the many academic colleagues and educationalists who remain obsessed enough to keep on trying to describe, analyse and understand education in so many diverse ways.

Andrew Pollard
June 2013

A note on citation

If wishing to quote from a reading within this book in coursework or for a publication, you will need to cite your source. Using the Harvard Convention and drawing only on this text, you should provide a bibliography containing details of the *original* source. These are provided in the introduction to each reading. You should then put: 'Cited in Pollard, A. (ed.) (2014) *Readings for Reflective Teaching in Schools.* London: Bloomsbury.

If you are building a substantial case around any reading, you are strongly recommended to go back to the original source and to check your argument against the full text. Sources will be available through the libraries of most colleges and universities with teacher education provision, and many are accessible online. If using hardcopy, you should then cite the full text only, with the specific page numbers of any material that you quote. If using an on-line resource, you should cite page numbers as appropriate and the date on which the site was accessed.

Preface

This book is part of a set of professional resources. It links directly to a textbook, *Reflective Teaching in Schools*, and to a website, *reflectiveteaching.co.uk*. They are part of a series with explicit provision for early years, schools, further, adult and higher education.

For primary and secondary schools, we offer three fully integrated and complementary sources of materials:

- *Reflective Teaching in Schools* (4th edition) (the core book for school-based professional development)
- *Readings for Reflective Teaching in Schools* (2nd edition) (a portable library with 112 readings linked to the core book)
- *reflectiveteaching.co.uk* (a website for supplementary material, updated 'Notes for Further Reading', 'Reflective Activities', links, downloads, etc.)

Reflective Teaching in Schools considers a very wide range of professionally relevant topics, presents key issues and research insights, suggests 'Reflective Activities' for classroom work, and offers notes for selected 'Key Readings'. The text is used to support professional development by many schools, universities and training consortia, and has become a central textbook supporting school-based practice for initial teacher education courses across the UK and beyond. Secondary and primary specialists from the University of Cambridge have developed the 2014 version to support, in particular, teacher education in England, Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.

Readings for Reflective Teaching in Schools, the present book, has been extensively updated since earlier versions. Whilst some classic papers remain, most of the 112 readings are new. Material from important recent research has been added, drawing internationally as well as reflecting the unique character of the countries of the UK and Ireland. The balance of the book has been adjusted to reflect current issues and concerns in education – and to support a wide range of school–university partnership arrangements.

reflectiveteaching.co.uk is a website supplementing the two books. For example, there are materials on mentoring which will be particularly helpful for school-based teacher education, and also on how to design and carry out teacher research and classroom enquiry as part of professional development. The web enables the Editorial Board to update

material regularly. This is particularly relevant for 'Notes for Further Reading', a more extensive and current source of suggestions than is possible in a printed book. There is also a compendium of terms and additional 'Reflective Activities', download facilities for diagrams and supplementary resources of various kinds. The section on 'Deepening Expertise' offers access to more advanced features, including a framework linking research evidence to powerful concepts for the analysis of classroom practice.

Three major aims have guided the production of *Readings for Reflective Teaching in Schools*.

First, it is intended as a resource for busy teachers, mentors and trainee teachers in primary and secondary education who appreciate the value of educational thinking and research, and who wish to have easy access to key parts of important publications. There are illustrative readings from the UK and Ireland, but the issues are of relevance anywhere.

Second, the book provides an opportunity to 'showcase' some of the excellent educational research from across the world which, in recent years, has been accumulating clear messages about high quality teaching and learning. Readers may then wish to consult the full accounts in the original sources, each of which is carefully referenced.

Finally, these materials provide a unique resource for professional development activities and for initial teacher education courses. The structure of the three sources is identical, so that the chapters map across from one book to the other and to the web. Thus, whether used in classroom activities, private study, mentoring conversations, workshops, staff meetings, seminars or research projects, the materials should be easily accessible.

Reflective activity is of vital importance to the teaching profession:

- It underpins professional judgement and its use for worthwhile educational purposes;
- It provides a vehicle for learning and professional renewal – and thus for promoting the independence and integrity of teachers;
- Above all, it is a means to the improvement of teaching, the enhancement of learning and the steady growth in standards of performance for both schools and national education systems.

We hope that you will find these materials helpful in your professional work and as you seek personal fulfilment as a teacher.

Andrew Pollard
Bristol, Cambridge, London, June 2013

part one

Becoming a reflective professional

1. **Identity** Who are we, and what do we stand for?
2. **Learning** How can we understand learner development?
3. **Reflection** How can we develop the quality of our teaching?
4. **Principles** What are the foundations of effective teaching and learning?

1 Identity

Who are we and what do we stand for?

Readings

The readings in this chapter assert the significance of values, perspectives and identities of both teachers and pupils. We see how social expectations and contemporary change impacts on these roles, but also how they are enacted in deeply personal ways. For both 'teacher' and 'pupil', we thus need to understand each person and the roles which they enact.

On ourselves as teachers, Gu (1.1) reviews some contemporary studies of teacher careers and the ways in which professional commitment is sustained. Swann et al. (1.4), together with Jones (1.5), challenge us to consider the basic assumptions which we make about children and young people as learners – a theme which recurs through the book.

On pupils, Pollard and Filer (1.2) suggest how children and young people exercise their agency and develop 'learner identities' as a product of their experiences in school, playground, home and online. Rudduck and Flutter (1.3) build on this with more detailed consideration of the benefits of consulting pupils and engaging them fully in classroom life.

The final reading, from Feinstein et al. (1.6) paints a 'big picture' of how circumstances shape experience and of the 'wider benefits' of learning for later life.

The parallel chapter of *Reflective Teaching in Schools* is structured in a similar way. 'Knowing ourselves as teachers' suggests ways of thinking about personal values and the ways in which they influence teaching. The second part is on 'knowing children as pupils'. This reviews the educational literature on pupil cultures and offers activities for investigating student perspectives and experiences of schooling. The chapter concludes with suggestions for 'Key Readings'.

reflectiveteaching.co.uk offers 'Notes for Further Reading' on these issues, as well as additional 'Reflective Activities', resources and suggestions for 'Deepening Expertise'.

Reading 1.1

Being a teacher in times of change

Qing Gu

How do people become effective teachers?

Qing Gu outlines some of the challenges facing teachers in contemporary societies. In particular she points out the way in which teachers are positioned as mediators between society's past, present and future – as realised in a very wide range of expectations. And yet teachers are simply people who occupy a particular role on behalf of society.

To meet these challenges, teachers need a robust sense of personal identity and a commitment to professional development and reflective practice – and these must be sustained throughout their career. And even so, it is often the case that a strong sense of moral purpose generates personal and emotional challenges. (For further insights into these issues and to teacher career, see Day et al., 2007).

How confident do you feel as a person in the role of a teacher?

Edited from: Gu, Q. (2007) *Teacher Development: Knowledge and Context*. London: Continuum, 7–12.

Current changes in the global and local context pose profound implications for the teaching profession:

> An education system needs to serve the needs of society. When that society is undergoing profound and accelerating change, then particular pressures emerge for improvement in the alignment between the education system and these changing societal needs. The teaching profession is a key mediating agency for society as it endeavours to cope with social change and upheaval. *(Coolahan, 2002: 9)*

Teachers thus play a mediating role in bridging the past, the present and the future, the traditions and the innovations, the old and the new. Hargreaves (2003: 15) describes teachers as catalysts of successful knowledge societies who 'must be able to build special knowledge of professionalism'. This new professionalism means that teachers may not have the autonomy to teach in the way they wished, that they have to learn to teach in way they were not taught, and that they need to build and develop a capacity for change and risk (Hargreaves, 2003; see also Robertson, 1996, 1997).

Teachers' knowledge, values and beliefs are subjected to constant re-examination and testing by the process of change in modern society.

For these reasons, continuing professional learning and development has become a necessary condition for teachers to sustain commitment and maintain effectiveness. OECD (2005: 14) calls to transform teaching into a knowledge-rich profession:

> Research on the characteristic of effective professional development indicates that

> teachers need to be active agents in analysing their own practice in the light of professional standards and their own students' progress in the light of standards for student learning.

Teachers' professional identities – the way teachers perceive themselves as professionals in the classroom, the school, the community and the society – are undergoing profound change. In between the tensions embedded in the context where teachers work and live are their struggles to negotiate their understanding of what it means to be a teacher and their endeavours to 'integrate his various statuses and roles, as well as his diverse experiences, into a coherent image of self' (Epstein, 1978: 101). Castells (2004: 6–7) defines identity as people's source of meaning and experience. He distinguishes identities from roles:

> Roles … are defined by norms structured by the institutions and organizations of society. Their relative weight influencing people's behaviour depends upon negotiations and arrangements between individuals and these institutions and organizations. Identities are sources of meaning for the actors themselves, and by themselves, constructed through a process of individuation … In simple terms, identities organize the meaning, while roles organize the functions. I define *meaning* as the symbolic identification by a social actor of the purpose of her/his action. I also propose the idea that, *in the network society*, … for most social actors, meaning is organized around a primary identity (that is an identity that frames the others), which is self-sustaining across time and space.

However, teachers' roles are an indispensable part of their professional identities. Teachers play a variety of roles within the classroom: an authority, facilitator, parent, friend, judge and counsellor. Their strong sense of moral purpose and the immense satisfaction derives from the academic and personal progress of their students and makes a major contribution to the teacher's professional outlook. Outside the classroom, a teacher may also have additional managerial responsibilities. These managerial roles often give teachers a broader view of the education system, and help to promote the quality of their teaching in the classroom. In their national study of 300 teachers, Day et al. (2006, 2007) found that teachers' identity is a composite construct consisting of interactions between personal, professional and situated factors. Teachers' personal lives influence, positively or negatively, the construction of teachers' professional identities. For example, a teaching family background, being a parent, and taking on active roles in the local community may all affect how teachers view the part they play in the classroom; marriage breakdown, ill health and increased family commitments can, on the other hand, become sources of tensions 'as the individual's sense of identity could become out of step' (Day et al., 2006: 149).

In contrast to many other professions, teaching is emotionally attached and value-laden. Teachers' intense feelings in the job are not 'merely intrapersonal, psychological phenomena' (Kelchtermans, 2005: 996):

> Emotions are understood as experiences that result from teachers' embeddedness in and interactions with their professional environment. They are treated as meaningful experiences, revealing teachers' sense making and showing what is *at stake* for them …

In other words, a teacher's emotions are contextually embedded and highly rationalised with their values, beliefs and philosophies of education. They are inextricably bound up with their *moral purposes* and their ability to achieve those purposes (Hargreaves 1998). Hargreaves reminds us that for teachers, students are an 'emotional filter'. The OECD's Ro study on attracting and retaining effective teachers also suggests that seeing children achieve remains a major, intrinsic source of teachers' job satisfaction and fulfilment. Roles for teachers are not merely associated with functions, duties and responsibilities. They are filled with positive emotions:

> Good teaching is charged with positive emotion. It is not just a matter of knowing one's subject, being efficient, having the correct competences, or learning all the right techniques. Good teachers are not just well-oiled machines. They are emotional, passionate beings who connect with their students and fill their work and their classes with pleasure, creativity, challenges and joy. *(Hargreaves 1998: 835)*

For many teachers their jobs consist of far more than fulfilling routine requirements that are externally imposed upon them. Numerous studies suggest that this is also the case for the millions of teachers working in all the corners of the world. The sense of calling urges them to take actions in seeking ways of improving their teaching practice and service for the students, sustaining their sense of efficacy, promoting their sense of agency, commitment and resilience, and ultimately their effectiveness. Teachers have to play a range of roles to fulfil their commitment and internal calling to serve in education, such as a facilitator, an encourager, a parent, an authority and a friend. All of these roles contribute to the formation of teachers' identities and any change in context leads to further change in these professional and personal identities.

Reading 1.2

Being a learner through years of schooling

Andrew Pollard and Ann Filer

This reading focuses attention on the ways in which, as children and young people grow up, they make their way through a succession of new situations and experiences. Whilst adults may hope to provide security and opportunity within the social settings which are created in homes, schools, playgrounds and online, such contexts also often contain challenges and threats which young children have to negotiate. As children develop, perfect or struggle with their strategies for coping with such situations, so they learn about other people, about themselves and about life.

Thinking about some children you know, how do social factors, such as family life, friendships and relationships with teachers, appear to influence the fulfilment of their learning potential?

Adapted from: Pollard, A. (1996) *The Social World of Children's Learning*. London: Cassell. 8–14, and Pollard, A. (2003) 'Learning through life', in Watson, D. and Slowey, M. *Higher Education and the Lifecourse*. London: Continuum, 167–85.

Six key questions can help us develop an understanding of the social influences on children's learning. The questions are theoretically informed and their apparent simplicity is deceptive for they have many extensions and nuances. Beware then, for they may become a source of endless fascination!

1. *Where and when is learning taking place?* invites consideration of home, school, on-line and informal learning settings in relation to wider political and socio-economic contexts.
2. *Who is learning?* draws attention to children and young people as individuals, to the parents, teachers, peers and siblings who variously influence them, and to the approaches to learning which are characteristically adopted.
3. *What is to be learned?* calls for a consideration of the content of the learning challenges that children and young people face.
4. *How supportive are the learning contexts?* suggests a focus on processes of interaction, on the expectations, constraints and opportunities within specific settings.
5. *What are the outcomes?* then prompts a review of the story and outcomes of each child's story in terms of learning achievements, social status, identity and self-esteem.
6. Why? requires reflection on patterns in learning outcomes and trajectories, and on explanations for those patterns. When we stand back, what can we see and understand?

Of course, such questions interlock with and interpolate each other so that an attempt to answer one will immediately make it necessary to pose others. Such spirals of questioning lead, hopefully, to cumulative understanding.

The questions thus constitute a kind of 'tool-kit' for enquiry.

Where and when is learning taking place?

We can identify two ways in which the question, 'where?', is important. First, there is the issue of context at the levels of community, region and country. This has significance because of the social, cultural, political and economic circumstances within which the lives of people are played out.

At a more detailed level, we need to understand the contexts in which children interact with others – the home, the school, on-line and in more informal social settings such as the playground. Each of these settings has specific characteristics with socially constructed rules and expectations guiding behaviour within them. Those of the classroom tend to be more constraining than those, for instance, of the home or playground, but each is important in structuring children's experiences.

The timing and sequencing of events is another aspect of social context. Again there is the historical relationship to developments elsewhere within community, region and country. Teachers, parents and children live *through* particular periods of social and economic development, and experience them sequentially. The era through which childhood occurs thus contributes to biography and identity.

It is also appropriate to consider the development and progress of children and young people year by year, as they pass through the care of successive teachers. There may be patterns which will help in understanding the strengths and weaknesses of the learner.

'Who' is learning?

We must also consider the children and young people directly and, in particular, their 'identity' as learners. How do they see themselves as they strive to fulfil their individual potential within the social contexts in which they live?

To understand influences on identity, we must pay particular attention to the 'significant others' in each child's life – to those who interact with them and influence the ways in which they see themselves. Thus we need to consider the role of parents or carers, siblings, peers and teachers.

Every child also has both physical and intellectual potential which, during the school years, continue to develop. Whether it is through confidence in reading, understanding of early science, or the stirring of sexuality, this gradual realisation of physical and intellectual potential rolls forward to influence self-confidence.

Identity is also influenced by gender, social class and ethnicity, each of which is associated with particular cultural and material resources and with particular patterns of social expectation. Age, status and position, within the family, classroom and playground, are also important for the developing sense of identity of children and young people.

The *perspectives* of children about learning and the *ways in which they respond* to particular challenges will be closely linked to their sense of personal identity. Issues of interest and motivation are particularly important. For instance, children often view self-directed learning through play quite differently from work in response to a task which has been set at school. This brings us to issues of learning stance and strategies.

By *learning stance*, I refer to the characteristic approach which individuals adopt when confronted by a new learning challenge. Obviously a lot will depend on the content of the specific challenge and the context in which it is faced, but there are also likely to be patterns and tendencies in approach. How self-confident do particular children tend to be? Do they feel the need to assert personal control in a learning situation or will they conform to the wishes of others? How are they motivated towards new learning?

Whatever the initial stance of a learner, he or she must then deploy specific *strategies* in new learning situations. The range of strategies available to individual children will vary, with some being confident to make judgements and vary their approach to tasks, whilst others will need guidance and encouragement to move from tried and tested routines.

What is to be learned?

What are the major learning challenges which children and young people face?

At home, for instance, each child also has to develop a place within the family in relation to his or her siblings which, for some, can be stressful and competitive. And as they grow older, the struggle begins for independence and to be taken seriously as a young adult. There are everyday challenges too such as learning to tie laces, be polite to others, swim, ride a bike, go to school, and complete homework.

In the classroom, each child has first to learn a role as a pupil – for instance, to cope with classroom rules and conventions, to answer his or her name at registration, to sit cross-legged on the carpet and to listen to the teacher. Then, as pupils, children must respond to the curricular tasks which they are set. In primary schools, this is likely to include large amounts of work on English and mathematics, with the subjects becoming increasingly specialised through secondary education. Finally, the learning challenges are those of formal examinations.

Among peers and within the playground and other informal settings, considerable learning is involved in maintaining friendships and peer relationships. Reciprocity, a foundation for friendship, requires learning about the social and cultural expectations and needs of others, whether this is manifested in knowledge of the latest ‘craze’, the rules of games or how to manage falling ‘in’ and ‘out’ with friends. In due course, the challenges of adolescence are posed.