5,848 words

REFLECTING CRITICALLY ON PRACTICE

SHEILA KING

The aims of this chapter are:

a) To explore the much used term 'reflective practice'.
b) To understand how the process of critical reflection links theory and practice.
c) To consider how teachers can develop their skills in reflective practice to benefit planning and teaching.

Introduction

Since this chapter is linked to Toh's (2004) MA dissertation, it is fitting to begin with a quotation from English literature used by Toh (page 1):

> 'We had the experience but missed the meaning' (T.S. Eliot The Dry Salvages).

So it is for many of us teaching in educational settings all across the globe. Classrooms and other learning environments are such complex places that unravelling the intricacies of what goes on is a difficult task. This chapter proposes that critical reflection on practice must be an integral part of any teacher's work because it equips them to deal with the varied issues, encounters and contexts in which they will teach. It supports teachers in being adaptive and reactive to changes in time.

Of course all teachers review and reflect. Much of this is done on the bus going home or awaiting sleep in bed, and so is 'solitary in the head, unstructured reflection' (Moore,

2004:110). Such reflection frequently focuses on negative experiences and short term solutions to immediate issues. By comparison, reflective practice goes beyond any common sense approach. It is a deeper and constructive process which encourages, both inexperienced and experienced professionals, to reflect explicitly and critically so that practice is improved. By engaging in this process the teachers' own theories towards pedagogy are given value and teachers take greater ownership of their professional and learning processes rather than relying on the 'good teaching' of universities, consultants and research centres (Zeichner, 1994:10).

The rest of this chapter deals with the way in which reflective practice is used by policy makers, teacher educators and teachers to improve their work and ultimately to improve the learning of their pupils. Before this and to set some context I will consider one other model of the teacher which sits somewhat uncomfortably at times, alongside the reflective practitioner; that of the competent practitioner.

The competent practitioner model

Initial teacher training in England exists in a statutory framework in which are a number of Standards student teachers need to achieve in order to be recommended for Qualified Teacher Status. This competency model of training began in 1992 and the frequency with which revisions through government circulars have been issued since then indicates the interest government at the time had in teacher training: (Circulars 9/92 (DFE 1992) 14/93 (DFE 1993) 10/97 (DfE 1997), 4/98 DfEE 1998) DfES and TTA (2002) and TDA (2007)). A competency model of teacher *training* rather than the notion of teacher *education* preferred by universities became established and full details of this model and the process of its

inception and revisions can be found in Butt (2002), Moore (2000) and Heilbronn (2008).

Since 1992, largely as a result of these government directives, teacher training has become more focused on the practicalities of learning and teaching and less on the theory. This was strongly influenced by the directive that 24 weeks of a secondary PGCE student's time and 18 weeks of a primary teacher's time, was to be school-based. Another influential development was that the high status Ofsted inspection system for England, which ultimately determines the number of training places and therefore the funding an institution receives, became strongly influenced by the competency model of training (Ofsted/TTA 1996). In consequence, and driven by the necessity to achieve high grades from Ofsted inspections of initial teacher training, universities and the alternative school-based training routes tend to have adopted the competency model. In practice this meant the development of a 'tick box' mentality where student teachers gather evidence against each Standard. Evidence collected to demonstrated a teacher's ability to teach can became fragmented into compartmentalised segments. There were many critics. Hagger and McIntyre (2006:63) state 'nobody could seriously argue that learning to meet each of the standards separately could be equated with learning to teach.' Moore (2000:126) argues that one difficulty of the competency model is that the competencies are seen to provide the entire syllabus and so suggest that the ingredients of 'good teaching' can be itemised. This implies that by mastering these segments anyone can make an effective teacher, without any sense of their holisitic practice. He also highlights the lack of exploration of 'what makes an *effective* teacher?' and he argues, the competency model attempts to define a universally *'good'* teacher without reference to personal differences and contextual backgrounds. Another critic, Bernstein (1996:6), suggests a more political agenda with blame for any educational failure conveniently moved to the individual teacher and school rather than the more complex issues of the educational process

within an increasingly complex educational systems and society.

The reflective practitioner model

At the same time as the competent practitioner model was being developed, the parallel model of the reflective practitioner was also adopted by many teacher educators and the picture remains broadly the same at the time of writing. Scrutiny of prospectuses and course handbooks for many initial teacher education programmes and professional development courses highlight their aim to produce reflective professionals. Many journal articles, books and conference titles include the term 'reflective' and its derivatives.

The reflective practitioner model goes beyond the acquisition of competencies or skills required for successful teaching, but encourages the teacher to "reflect constructively upon ongoing experience as a way of developing those skills and knowledge and improving the quality and effectiveness of one's work" (Moore 2000: 128). One of the key words here is 'constructively'. Most teachers at some time have tossed and turned in the small hours of the morning over what to do with class 6A or a particular pupil for whom no strategy seems to work. Other teachers may 'coast' as their university tutors, NQT mentors or school managers are no longer there to challenge their work and they develop too low expectations of their pupils. Without a mental process to consider improvements this is not true reflective practice. Even where there is a will and even when the experience and wisdom of other teacher educators can be utilised it is ultimately up to the teachers themselves to be 'sufficiently aware of what they are doing in their teaching for them to be able to subject their developing or established practices to anything like the necessary degree of regular critical scrutiny' (Hagger and McIntyre 2006: 56).

The development of reflective practice model

Most, if not all, new teachers could attempt an explanation of the term 'reflective practice' but I remain sceptical that, despite the rhetoric, the concept is well delivered and understood. I suspect many teachers groan at the mention of the words 'reflective practice' chiefly because at worst it is used for little more than 'thinking about' or 'evaluating' and without clear purpose and informed thinking the process is of little use.

There is a very large literature on reflective practice which is increasingly common to health, the law and other professions. The 'modern' father of reflective practice is often said to be Dewey (1938a; 1938b). Dewey identified two parts to practice: the *process* of how decisions are made and the *content and experience* which is the substance that drives the thinking. Schön applied Dewey's work to the teaching profession (Schön 1987; 1993) and argued that:

> (the reflective practitioner) can surface and criticise the tacit understandings that have grown up around the repetitive experiences of a specialised practice, and can make new sense of the situations of uncertainty or uniqueness which he may allow himself to experience'
>
> (Schön 1993:61).

Schön understood the complexities of teaching contexts describing them as 'swampy lowlands where situations are confusing 'messes' incapable of technical solutions' (ibid: 42) and where teachers become complacent and experience inertia because the complexities are too great to make sense of.

If readers of this chapter wish to avail themselves of more literature on reflective practice

then Zeichner (1994), Moon (2004), Moore (2004) and in a geographical context, Butt (2002) are useful starting points. There are critics of reflective practice too (Eraut 1994). One criticism is that the practice is too introspective to benefit the wider profession but dialogues between professionals and the development of learning sets and communities of practice can mitigate this issue. Many student teachers, especially in subject areas where writing (in a reflective/analytical way) does not come always easily, complain of the endless written accounts that training courses in reflective practice can demand. This can and should be overcome by a strong element of discussion, problem solving and peer coaching techniques.

Critical reflection

Critical reflection is the basis of reflective practice and involves an individual analysing, reconsidering and questioning professional and personal experience. The critical aspect comes in adding depth and breadth to the meanings of these experiences by asking deeper questions. It further requires the reflector to be open minded to the validity of others' perspectives and crucially to the context in which the activity takes place.

> Perhaps even more central to adult learning than elaborating established meaning schemes is the process of reflecting back on prior learning to determine whether what we have learned is justified under present circumstances. This is a crucial learning process egregiously ignored by learning theorists.
>
> (Mezirow *et al*, 1990:5)

In the real world, critical reflection may just as likely to lead to self-justification, self-indulgence or self-pity. It may also lead to disillusionment as reflective practitioners

unsupported by their institutions in supporting ways to change, feel frustrated. Mezirow *et al* suggest critical reflection is transformational but this is likely to be so only if teachers practise this in a supportive school culture or higher education environment.

When individuals acknowledge their personal context, bias and prejudices, their life history or autobiography, .the term reflexive practice is used. (Moore, 2000; Leat,1997). These provide the significant context for, and the selectivity involved in, the reflection. Moore (2000) claims reflexive practice moves reflective practice away from the concept of the teacher as the rational, unified self, somehow removed from the social circumstances in which he is constructed, towards a notion that 'self' is constructed, many faceted and continuously developing. It involves the meta-level: how the teacher reflects on the *ways* they reflect. In many geography classrooms where 'Thinking Skills' activities are used (Leat, 1998; Nichols, 2001) pupils reach higher levels of understanding when they engage in *how* their thinking led to their conclusions and this is equally necessary for reflexive practice.

Developing critically reflective practice

During the first years of teaching we learn to reflect *in* action, something that might previously have been referred to as 'thinking on your feet'. Where this is effective a teacher's response is appropriate and has a useful outcome. It is contextualised in that teachers 'know' the pupils and understand that the last lesson of the day, or the lesson after games may require different approaches to other lessons. During many years of running professional development courses for teachers I have heard the cries 'well that wouldn't work …..in my school' / 'with 9X' / 'if Kieran was present'! To counter such claims a second type of reflection is required; that of reflection *on* action. Such reflection is tougher because it

demands a *critical* reflection which opens the possibilities of the teacher's own attitudes, skills and assumptions to be explored, running the risk of exposing areas of weakness.

Comment [SK1]: Clare. I think this may be a bit repetitive and the paragraph above could be deleted, particularly if space is tight. However it does talk to the reader more than some of the other text which may or may not fit in with the rest of your chapters.

New teachers often reach a crucial step in their learning when the classrooms that they thought they knew become increasingly complex places. Figure 1 illustrates four teachers thoughts after thay had engaged in a period of critical reflection. In the following, more detailed example Sophie, a student teacher was observing an experienced teacher's classroom during the initial weeks of her course and writing up her reflections.

Comment [SK2]: Move figure 1 as appropriate.

Initially she writes,

> I think the most important feature of the class was how strong the unit seemed.... energy seemed to have been harnessed by encouraging the students to be independent learners, by allowing them freedom to move around, to use resources on the walls or to start up the computer.....Using an understanding of the ecosystem model[i] it is clear that one of the most important aspects of this class is its history of long established practices and routine.

Of the framework which is used to structure the observation Sophie writes,

> (it) helps to direct and guide observation, breaking down complexities that are too unmanageable to be dealt with initially as a whole.

Later she concludes,

> "I do think that I have improved (in classroom observation) and certainly the use of the ecosystem model has helped to guide my observation. Slowly the classroom is

becoming a little less familiar."

Lambert and Sankey 1994:175-181

Sophie's interesting, final phrase surely signals a geography PGCE student making progress on her learning journey.

Figure 1
Teacher 1 'I have enjoyed reflecting on the big concepts and processes that school geography aims to develop in students. This is particularly important at this time when geography as a subject is under threat.'
Teacher 2 'Learning to work within this reflective practice model in my the two schools where I have worked has changed the way I view teaching. I understand teaching has a strong craft component but is chiefly characterised by ongoing self reflection, collaboration, adaptation and learning.'
Teacher 3 'I have developed my reflective strategies and moved – to some extent at least – past ritualistic reflection towards more authentic and constructive self reflection.'
Teacher 4 'It hasn't been easy to process some of the powerful emotions I felt when things went disastrously wrong and to turn them into constructive experiences. It's been hard to act on advice when I sometimes didn't want to …but it almost always worked.'

More experienced teachers also benefit from having their accepted understanding of their pupils, teaching and classrooms challenged. However this is more difficult once mentors for initial teacher training and the induction year no longer have a role to play and staff development is largely dependent on the school's leadership team. Therefore it is up to

individual teachers to provide time and mechanisms for evaluating their work, with occasional views provided by pupils, other external mentors, coaches and inspectors..

A teacher's critical reflection leads to more than just a gain in knowledge; it should also challenge the concepts and theories by which sense is made of that knowledge. The observer sees not just more, but differently and it is usually true that sharing the process with a peer or mentor/coach leads to an even deeper level of understanding. The final stage of reflection is action, with the teacher's self review and reflection cycle beginning all over again.

How does critical reflection link theory and practice?

Reflective practice must be learnt rather than taught and it requires the teacher to have an open mind which is predicated on improvement through practice and informed by theory. Here is another difficult term. What is theory? (see also Chapter XX) At its simplest level theory may guide you in what you do or don't do. A teacher who has a framework of behaviour in her head for occasions when she greets her class or marks a piece of homework is using theory. Learning theories have two main values according to Hill (2002). One is in providing us with vocabulary and a conceptual framework for interpreting the learning that we observe. The other is in suggesting where to look for solutions to practical problems. The theories do not give us solutions, but they do direct our attention to those variables that are crucial in finding solutions. It is unlikely teachers whose practice is largely uninformed by the theories of others, will develop the professional competence required by teachers in the twenty first century.

The linking of theory and practice becomes a tension in teacher education when theory is

seen by teachers as the domain of the universities and detached from schools; when it is 'seen as an extension of the theoretical perspectives of the universities into schools clearly distinguished from the student teachers' everyday work there.' (Hagger and McIntyre 2006: 60) However there are signs that in an increasing number of schools these boundaries are breaking down. One key factor is that dedicated senior school mentors coordinate initial and continuing professional development and as such are professional, school-based educators. Teachers are more frequently engaging in funded and non-funded practitioner and action research. PGCE courses work more and more in partnership with schools in delivering professional development; constructing research projects of interest to both schools and universities. Three examples illustrate the point that theory is increasingly being constructed with practitioners:

a) eight excellent practitioners in schools facing challenging circumstances and which have been identified as having excellent practice in initial teacher education and/or induction are working with university staff to identify the barriers and ways these schools have overcome the barriers. (Networks for Learning Project TDA 2008 not yet published)

b) five schools are evaluating a project designed jointly by university tutors and school staff in which student teachers act as teaching assistants to prepare them for their future role in working with teaching assistants (Professional Development for Schools project TDA London East 2008-9 not yet published)

c) teachers in five schools alongside three university tutors are defining the benefits engagement in ITE brings to schools(Professional Development for Schools project TDA London East 2008-9 not yet published)

Examples of the outcomes of many other teacher research projects can be found at the Teacher Training Resource Bank (www.ttrb.ac.uk), and at the Department for Children,

Comment [SK3]: If necessary we could add the names of the projects that these are operating under but they are not yet published on a website as they are work in progress. I've added in brackets but delete if you wish.

Schools and Families (www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/ntrp).

One of the tensions faced particularly during initial teacher training and the induction year by teachers who engage in critical reflection is a fear that if they question the work of their subject departments and schools in an open and honest way this may not be interpreted well by some schools. It is a fine balance to establish an effective dialogue without being seen as confrontational however school leaders and managers increasingly see their schools as learning communities and take professional development more seriously.

In the following section of this chapter I wish to suggest some practical strategies that encourage critical reflection. These focus on the exploration of the personal viewpoints and autobiographies which shape our approach to teaching; and so enable reflexivity. Some ideas and examples are more appropriate to novice or recently qualified teachers while others may be preferred by experienced teachers or teachers engaging in specific enquiries and research.

Questions as a starting point

The identification of 'good' quality questions raised by teachers will support critical evaluation. Roth (1989) includes some of the behaviours and processes that build well-grounded reflection and these appear in brackets alongside the questions below. Such questions might be:

- What did pupil X leave the lesson knowing that he did not 'know' before he entered? (Would the pupil give the same answer?) (q*uestioning the basis of what is done*)
- Was the way I chose to teach episode Y as successful as with previous classes? Should I use a problem solving approach again? (*asking 'what if'... seeking alternatives)*

- How will I judge if greater learning has been achieved through the group activity than had the exercise been done independently? *(exploring alternatives)*
- Were all pupils engaged in the task? If not what were they doing when off-task? Would my teaching assistant say the same? *(asking for others' viewpoints)*

Specific to geography teachers is the notion of teaching and learning 'good geography' by which is meant 'accurate, meaningful, up-to-date and accessible' geography (Butt 2002: 196). This can be challenging in a subject where many teachers are non-specialists or have senior responsibilities so may not find it so easy to keep up-to-date (although The Geographical Association and selected subject websites do support teachers hugely). High order questions that are geography specific might include:

- Did the use of the glacier animations really improve understanding? How do I know this? *(keeping an open mind)*
- Did the thinking skills 'mystery' on local planning develop conceptual development rather than being simply a fun activity? *(synthesising and testing)*
- Does my use of Barnaby Bear with year 3 improve pupils' geographical understanding? *(considering consequences)*
- In what ways did my unit on 'Trade not Aid' provide extended opportunities for the significant number of very able pupils in my class. *(seeking underlying rationale)*

Frameworks for observation

It is generally accepted that learning through reflection is more potent if the observation process is structured and based on a framework to guide the act of reflection. While this chapter does not describe any specific frameworks, they are widely available (see for

example Wragg 1994 and for geography specific examples, Lambert and Balderstone 2000: 414-419 and King 2000). However, rather than choosing 'off the peg' frameworks designed by others, observers should build their own for specific purposes. In themselves observations can be illuminating but it is the opportunity to discuss the observations with the observed teacher or a peer that will probably add most value to the task. Jointly decided and pre-determined questions may form a useful base for building such a framework for this discussion.

Diaries and Journals as a record of reflection

One technique used to capture reflections is the keeping of a diary or journal, originally in written form but increasingly as video diaries. This enables the 'invisible to be rendered visible' and a dialogue, often with oneself, about practice to be set up (Moore 2000: 129). Such dialogue encourages taken-for-granted assumptions and practices to be questioned and for alternative approaches to classroom practice to be tried out and debated. In keeping a written record of their reflection, writers are encouraged to be frank and honest as it is from this, that important insights are more likely to arise. In additiomn writers are encouraged to express themselves freely without need to observe the normal academic practices involved in writing.

One challenge to relective practitioners is to move away from description to a deeper level of analysis. In a small study of twenty PGCE student teachers' 1000 word reflections, it became clear that the quality of their reflections improved towards the end of the course. Many initial statements began 'I have', I did', 'I was able to' I participated in and enjoyed' and 'I made more sense of' but they remained descriptive. One teacher who had a more developed

approach wrote:

> ‘In the beginning I thought I could ‘just do it’ like Mr White. I just didn’t realise that what I saw was the tip of the iceberg and he’d been learning their names since term started, he knew his classroom and resources and he could *anticipate* some things that might go wrong. My early observations just didn’t get to that level of depth and I was really keen to keep observing after I’d taken over my classes as I felt I learned more from having the deeper understanding’.

Conclusions in themselves are not the key outcome of reflective practice and should be reserved for the final stage of any writing logs since early conclusions may inhibit further insights and solutions. The keeping of reflective journals will not appeal to all teachers’ learning styles and the ability to write in an appropriate way needs to be learnt as much as any other technique. However, the experience can be invaluable as one teacher wrote,
‘I learnt the ability to constantly reflect on my practice and continue to make small changes that resulted in a cycle of improvement’.

Critical ‘friends’

The term critical ‘friend’ is used here to describe a colleague who may or may not have the role of mentor, coach or line manager. At best it will be someone who’s judgement and decisions the teacher trusts. Their role is to enter into a meaningful discussion about the reflections, whether they are based on observed lessons or written accounts, and they should challenge and provide feedback in a supportive manner.

There is no doubt that an effective mentor in the initial year(s) of teaching can do much to

establish a new *reflective* practitioner. For example, Mark wrote 'my NQT mentor really challenged my work with the sixth form. She said I didn't use the same humour or fun activities that I utilised well in Key Stages 3 and 4…and she was right! It was a really challenging dialogue we developed''. Another newly qualified teacher wrote 'my mentor here has constantly challenged me to re-assess my own prejudices and conceptions – which I didn't find easy. We all teach in schools that are different to the ones we were at and there's a lot to learn that's not about the subject'. One student teacher at the start of her career described a similar experience where she was strongly affected by the senior mentor who described many of the pupils' difficult home lives; something the student teacher had not encountered in her own schooling. 'I found teaching in that school unsettling and emotionally upsetting at first but it became fantastically rewarding, especially with the help and advice from the other teachers.'

Comment [SK4]: Delete the name and simply put one newly qualified teacher since names not used elsewhere.

Comment [SK5]: Could delte the last 4 lines and quote as I'm not sure it adds anything much.

Within the last decade the mentor model of teacher development has become more influenced by a coaching approach and this is well documented for example in Pask and Joy (2007), Robertson (2005), and Fogarty & Pete **(**2007**).** The employment of more in-house school coaches, the rise in popularity of professional development coaching courses in education and the intended introduction of school-based coaches as a key part of the government's new national Master of Teaching and Learning all support this (TDA 2008 and NCSL 2009 (website www.ncsl.org.uk accessed Jan 2nd 2009). What this brings to the reflective practitioner model is a richness of questioning, listening and thinking; a model which encourages different levels of thinking and participants to continue their reflections at home or a few days/week later.

The problem with reflective practice

Outcomes of reflection are frequently hard to define and quantify. They often involve the ability of the teacher to communicate, present, analyse and interact. A reflective practitioner's success is judged not through the numbers of pupils passing tests, important though that is, but on the nature of the learning process informed within the context in which it takes place. The 'messy complexity of the classroom' and the likelihood that we will never fully understand our practice are acknowledged (Goodson and Walker 1991: xii)Teachers also teach with a combination of outcomes in mind and these may be short term (within a lesson) or longer term (by the end of a unit of work) and focused on cognitive (intellectual) or affective (social, emotional or attitudinal) aspects of learning (Kyriacou 1997:8). In addition teachers personalise their teaching so that their response to a pupil with a learning difficulty may be different to those of a very able pupil.

So reflection is a complex activity and one which is strongly contextualised to the learning situation(s). While a teacher may choose to alter a planned activity or curtail a group discussion once the lesson has started, the extent to which this can realistically be done, especially for novice teachers, is limited.

Comment [SK6]: Could delete last sentence…not sure it adds much.

The revised Standards for Qualified Teacher Status (TDA 2007)now recognise the value of critical reflection and state that teachers should be able to:

Standard Q7 Reflect on and improve their practice

Standard Q8 Have a creative and constructively critical approach toward innovation

Standard Q29 Evaluate the impact of their teaching on the progress of all learners and modify their planning and classroom practice where necessary.

Comment [SK7]: This is the one area I'm not convinced about. As it sits isolated from the other text. See my previous words.

However this is a small step. High quality reflective practice encourages teachers to take risks and make changes without fear of failure, something that school need to also promote.

Comment [SK8]: This seems like an abrupt ending now.

Elaine Toh 2004

Understanding Reflective Practice in Geography: Teachers' Views, its Role and Feasibility. "Implications for professional development".

Toh's dissertation focuses on the process of undertaking reflective practice on geography teachers in Singapore. Inspired by the power of reflective practice on her own development, Toh wanted to explore how teachers responded to reflecting on their practice, and the problems they encountered.

Toh's literature review traces the development of the idea of reflective practice, and explores how key thinkers (like Dewey and Schön) have adapted and developed the concept. In her literature review, Toh identifies stages of reflective practice and strategies that teachers can use to develop it. From this extensive body of literature, Toh identifies which strategies and techniques will fit in with her research focus – that of getting teachers to engage with thinking reflectively.

Toh's research design was very ambitious and experimental. Building on the review of relevant literature, she developed a series of Self Reflection Sheets, and recruited a number of geography teachers in Singapore who agreed to fill these sheets in every two weeks (along with a pre and post- research questionnaire). So that she could monitor the data collection, all

the teachers agreed to email the Self Reflection Sheets directly to her. However, it became clear as the research progressed that despite having followed all conventions about negotiating access, some of Toh's teachers found it very difficult to fill in the sheets as often as she requested. It was at this stage the Toh had to be flexible in her research design. Her results started to illuminate unexpected phenomena.

In her results and discussion, Toh analysed the questionnaires that she received, and her communications with her participants. Toh identified that the process of engaging with critical reflection was very challenging and time-consuming for the teachers involved. In her conclusion, she reviews ways that the research design could have been adapted, but also highlights some valuable observations: that the process of reflection and thinking deeply about ones practice has the potential to transform practice, but that this process requires a great deal of commitment and support. In true reflective style, Toh also identifies how the process of research itself can have a positive impact on both the researcher and the participants in the research.

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Comment [SK9]: Think you deleted this section and now is not refered to. (which is fine by me but these needs to come out)

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Comment [SK10]: Why is this sitting here alone?

Recommended further readings:

HEIBRONN, R. (2008) 'Teacher **education and the development of practical judgement' London: Continum**

This book covers the history and context of teacher training and education in England, the teacher as reflective practitioner and the nature of teacher knowledge and understanding together. It considers the roles that teacher experience, mentors and research play in developing that reflective practice.

KYRIACOU, C. (1997) Effective teaching in Schools: Theory and Practice. London : Nelson Thornes

Effective Teaching in Schools is an accessible, general book which defines high quality classroom practice. The book helps to develop the essential skills of reflective practice yet remains strongly practical so it becomes an effective bridge between the theory students need to put their experience in context and the practice which allows them to build on theoretical work where it matters in the classroom.

BUTT, G. (2002) Reflective Teaching of Geography 11-18 London and New York: Continuum

This book is part of a series on reflective teaching as applied to subject areas; in this case geography. You will not find discussion or debate on the areas included in this chapter but rather it is highlighted here as a book which enables practitioners to apply theory and research relating to reflective practice to their own work.

[i] The ecosystem framework for observing classrooms is useful model based on the concept of an ecosystem as a way of relating the multitude of parts within a classroom to a view of the whole. It is argued that terms such a fragile, balance, dynamic change and interdependence are relevant to both forest and classroom settings. The model is too complex to be discussed in this chapter but full details are in Lambert and Sankey 1994:175-181 or summarised in

King (2000: 20-23)