

CHAPTER

9

Frameworks to make small changes with big impact: how can detailed reflection improve your practice?

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Change comes from small initiatives which work... We cannot wait for great visions from great people, for they are in short supply at the end of history. It is up to us to light our own small fires in the darkness.

(Charles Handy, in Brighouse and Woods 1999: 109)

Introduction

When you first enter teaching you may feel overwhelmed by the documentation with which you need to be familiar. There is a vast array of statutory and non-statutory guidance relating to what and how you should teach, and how you should monitor the improvement of your learners' attainment and achievements. Linked to this are the frameworks and standards that inform your professional learning and career development. The development of progressive career standards (detailed in Chapter 2) can sometimes give the impression that you are set on a smooth path that is taking you onward and upward. However, occasionally you will feel that your skill as a teacher is a little like the stock market; it can go down as well as up! Changing schools, moving from trainee to NQT, or having to teach a new subject or age group, are all transitions that can leave you feeling less skilled than before, even though plenty of professional learning is still taking place.

This chapter begins with an exemplification of just such a situation. A model of reflection that will help you identify, implement and evaluate small changes is explored, and frameworks to help you develop your practice are provided. These should be particularly useful at transition points in your early career. The focus for reflection is lesson evaluation, or more specifically, key aspects of a lesson where you would like to make a small change. For illustration purposes, three areas

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that often exercise beginning teachers have been selected: learning objectives, behaviour management and questioning. The conclusion reached is that minor changes can often result in significant improvements in the classroom.

Case Study 9.1a Transition from training to induction

At the end of her training Jo was selected for observation by an external examiner because of her excellent outcomes. She had very good subject knowledge and was enthusiastic about her subject and teaching.

She planned meticulously, using a range of teaching, learning and assessment strategies that engaged her classes. She modelled tasks well and gave good explanations. She used a range of differentiated questioning techniques that included all learners. She was consistent in her implementation of the school's policy for behaviour management. For example she made clear to pupils when they could work in pairs using 'quiet partner voices' and when they were expected to undertake 'silent individual work'.

In her final teaching practice, Jo was mentored by a very well-established head of department whose positive influence reached deep into every classroom. Fast forward to two terms later, however.

Case Study 9.1b

Jo is half way through her induction year in a new school, and for the most part is teaching alone. She is starting a lesson with Year 8, and is taking the attendance register. She has asked for silence, but doesn't get it; two boys at the front in particular are fooling around. She yells a warning, hands on hips. The two boys burst out laughing, and turn, grinning to share their triumph with the rest of the class. Jo is left feeling helpless in the face of such unseemly behaviour.

Developing 'practical wisdom'

Lunenberg and Korthagen (2009) recount a similar experience. Mary, doing well under the guidance of the class teacher during training, finds behaviour management much more problematic when teaching alone. They go on to document how Mary came to improve her practice over the next few years, developing what they call 'practical wisdom' (p. 226). They define this as 'the sensitivity for and awareness of the essentials of a particular practice situation that shape our perception of this situation' (p. 227). In other words, it comes from the day-to-day application of reflection-in-action during our teaching experiences, which we then

process through reflection-on-action. Thus we develop a 'bank' of responses and behaviours, and learn how to adjust them in different contexts. This is what we call 'experience'; practical wisdom, for Lunenberg and Korthagen, is how we use that experience in new contexts. They place 'practical wisdom' in the here and now, relating only to the present context. Jo's 'practical wisdom', like Mary's, becomes more apparent over time (see Case Study 9.1c)

Case Study 9.1c

In her third year of teaching, Jo has just instructed the class to work in silence for three minutes on a written activity. Her active questioning and good modelling have given the class the confidence and capacity to do the work. While she is bending over a desk, checking that the weakest members of the class are able to make a start, she senses something and half turns, noticing that the girls on the back row are passing a magazine under the desk. She straightens, looks directly at them, raises a quizzical eyebrow. The girls return to the task in hand.

During her final teaching practice, curriculum and pedagogic knowledge (see Chapter 1) were uppermost in Jo's mind, and much of her success was due to her ability to evaluate her practice in relation to her 'theoretical' learning. However, in her first year as a teacher, without the support of a mentor, there were moments when Jo lost sight of this relationship and allowed her feelings of frustration to dominate her thinking. Once she pulled back from this, and began once again to reflect on action using pedagogic and curriculum knowledge, she began to develop 'practical wisdom' in the new context. Lunenberg and Korthagen (2009) see the value of practical wisdom in its interaction with theoretical knowledge and practical experience (see Figure 9.1). We can see this interaction underpinning Jo's professional behaviour in her third year of teaching, as shown in Figure 9.2.

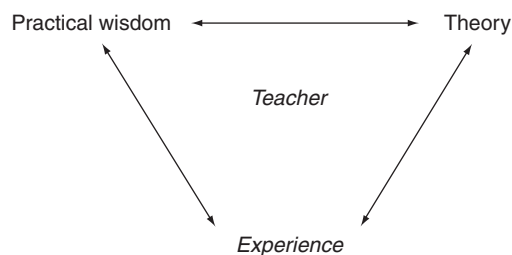


Figure 9.1 The triangular relationship between practical wisdom, theory and experience

Source: Lunenberg and Korthagen 2009: 229

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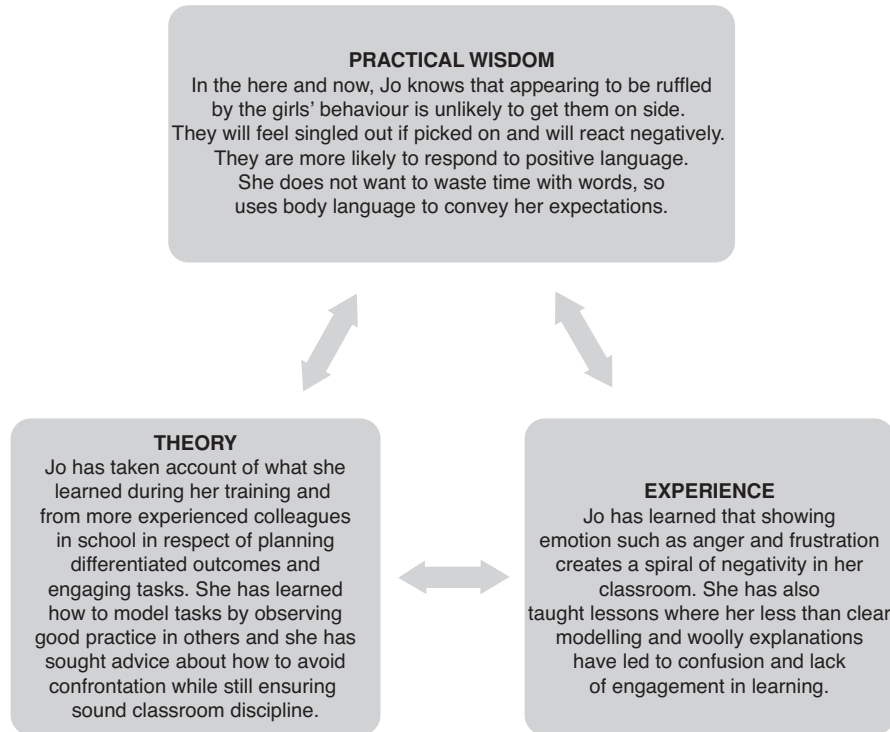


Figure 9.2 An example of the triangular relationship between practical wisdom, theory and experience

Lunenberg and Korthagen (2009: 235) affirm that 'Reflection seems the vital instrument for making the connections between experience, theory and practical wisdom.' Quoting from earlier work by Korthagen (2001) they emphasize that 'A teacher's professional learning will be more effective when the learner reflects *in detail* on his or her experiences' (p. 235). We cannot know the detail of Jo's reflections, but she has made considerable progress as a professional since her induction year. If we consider the above model, she may have begun her reflections by thinking about her *experience*: how various situations made her feel; how she thinks they made her pupils feel; what she has discovered will work with any given class and what is unlikely to be effective. Alternatively, she may have begun by seeking answers to questions such as: how do I impose my expectations about behaviour on this class? In this case, her starting point would have been *theory* from a range of sources. Finally, she may have started from the point of *existing practical wisdom*. This will be based largely on her prior experiences and she will need to explore key questions about the extent to which it is valid in the given situation. For example, if her own education was very formal, she may value an

authoritarian approach to discipline and will need to deconstruct her ideas in the face of classes who are clearly not responding to this method.

The frameworks used in this chapter are based on the premise, similar to that of Lunenberg and Korthagen (2009), that there is an interrelationship between theory, experience and the development of practical wisdom, and that *detailed reflection* is the key that unlocks this relationship. Detailed reflection can make a very big difference to a small part of the beginning teacher's practice, but there can be a snowball effect in that minor changes can lead to big improvements, in class control or effective learning, for example.

Case Study 9.1d What Jo did in her induction year

Following the incident when taking the register, Jo felt miserable all day. She recognized that losing her temper had been counter-productive, and that she needed a more focused strategy. 'I've tried doing what you do, and giving them the "stare",' she said to her induction tutor, "but it just doesn't work when I do it!" Jo and her tutor discussed this. Why did it work for the more experienced teacher? Through reflection, Jo came to realize that it was because this teacher had built up a reputation with her pupils. A few terms ago, she would have said to those boys: 'if you continue to talk you will have to sit separately'. Because, when they did talk, she moved one of them to the other end of the classroom, they soon understood that their actions would have consequences, and learned to respond to the 'look' that reminded them of this. Jo was reminded that she needed to clearly communicate expectations of her pupils' behaviour, beginning with silence during the taking of the register. From these small beginnings she was able to 'grow' her reputation for having consistently high expectations of behaviour. From Case Study 9.1c we can also see that Jo was then able to apply effectively the pedagogic skills that had been evident at the end of her training.

Brighouse and Woods (1999: 109) have also noted, in the context of school improvement, that 'tiny differences in input can quickly become overwhelming differences in output'. They call these small interventions 'butterflies' after the work on chaos theory that describes how the 'butterfly effect' can result in significant affects at the later time or place.

Case Study 9.2 Engaging learners in the lesson objectives

Chris was an NQT in secondary PE. He was feeling unhappy that his sixth form BTEC students were not engaging with the learning objectives of the lessons; they were not taking responsibility for their learning and were expecting Chris to do all the work. He writes in his reflective journal:

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“ To improve the quality of learning, self- and peer-assessment are important in AfL [assessment for learning] because they allow pupils to involve themselves in their own and others' learning (Black and Wiliam 1998; Casbon and Spackman 2005). The Assessment Reform Group (2002) has noted that learners must have their self-assessment skills developed by the teacher so that they have the capacity to be in control of their learning. When in charge of their learning, pupils must continually engage in self-assessment so that they are responsible for their own achievements and learning (Stiggins 2002). Additionally, independent learners should be able to identify the next steps needed for their learning (QCA 2007). However, pupils must be reminded of their learning goals and only assess their progress according to that criteria (Black et al. 2004). With all this in mind, I made a change to the way I ended my lessons. This involved sitting students in pairs at tables free of resources and asking them to discuss two things they had learnt in the lesson. By planning carefully the questions I asked, I was able to get in-depth answers about the theory learnt, with some remembering how it linked to past learning. I was satisfied with this different type of questioning because it allowed me to check the understanding of students. Past research has also found that a range of questioning techniques consolidates pupils' learning (Capel 2004).
(Chris, PE NQT) ”

Reflective task 9.1

- 1 What was Chris's 'butterfly'? What small change did he make to his practice?
- 2 What pleased him about the outcome?
- 3 What do you think was Chris's starting point in the relationship between theory, practice and practical wisdom?

Chris recognized his responsibility for helping his students become reflective and independent learners, and saw the value of self-and peer assessment in this process. He decided to start with two small changes in his lessons: he would give more thought to how he would question pupils about what they had learned, and he would 'clear the decks' of books and paper so that they were forced to think and talk about the questions he posed. Immediately his students were more engaged in their own learning, and gave him in-depth responses to his questions. However

his ideas are clearly underpinned by his knowledge of theory about assessment and about PE pedagogy. His reflections do not really tell us where he started this process: how, as Lunenberg and Korthagen (2009: 232) put it, he has gone ‘through the triangle’. Perhaps his starting point was *theory*: the knowledge he had about AfL; or maybe he started from a recognition that he was not making the most of his plenaries (*practical wisdom*). Finally, he may have already discovered, with another class, the benefit of more focused questioning (*experience*).

Lesson evaluation: reflecting in detail

According to Lunenberg and Korthagen, it is the detail of reflection that is most important.

“The more specific the analysis of a small part of a lesson is, the more a student teacher is supported in developing practical wisdom, as he or she is then supported in developing *sensitivity to the particulars of educational situations*.”

(Lunenberg and Korthagen 2009: 235)

They urge student teachers to reflect on the ‘thoughts, feelings, needs and actions’ that they have about a context, and, equally important, the thoughts, feelings, needs and actions of their learners. (See Chapter 4, Figure 4.1 for a series of reflective questions to help you to concretize these, drawn from Korthagen and Vasalos 2005). Understanding your own feelings and those of your learners will help you to gain the practical wisdom to improve your practice. If you are to reflect in this much detail, then it stands to reason that you cannot do so for every minute of every lesson that you have taught. You will no doubt be expected to complete a lesson evaluation in a standardized format provided by your training provider or school. The sheer number of such forms that you are asked to complete can mean that the action of lesson evaluation is reduced to a set of technical operations. For example:

- 1 Were the learning objectives appropriate?
- 2 Were the learning objectives met?
- 3 Were pupils engaged?

If you felt that that in general the lesson ‘went well’, you might be tempted to tick all the boxes without further reflection. At best, this can lead to stagnation of practice. At worst, you can be lulling yourself into a false sense of security!

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Reflective task 9.2 Reflecting on learning objectives

Refer to Figures 9.1 and 9.2. Starting from any one point on the triangle, use the questions in Table 9.1 to reflect on a lesson that you have taught recently. You must go through all the points on the triangle!

Of course, many trainee teachers plan their learning objectives really well, and have a carefully constructed lesson plan. Yet the lesson goes awry, because of behaviour problems. Amy was in this position:

Case Study 9.3 Dealing with low-level disruption

Amy was half way through her second week of her first teaching practice. Her mentor was happy that her planning was sound, and she knew that she had some good ideas for pupil learning activities. However, she was not yet 'pulling it off' in the classroom. There was quite a bit of low-level disruption and Amy was beginning to think that, as she was working so hard, this must be the pupils' fault – they just would not listen! Amy was not facing up to the responsibility she had for her pupils' behaviour. First, she needed to reflect on the situation. She needed to identify what might be realistic expectations for this class, and she needed to ask herself what she could do to improve the situation. At this point Amy was becoming fatalistic, believing that nothing could be done, and that all her efforts in planning were being wasted. Her mentor suggested that she observe the class with another teacher. From this she was able to see that:

Several pupils in this class were indeed inclined to chatter and disinclined to work, but. . .

when given plenty of short, manageable tasks with immediate, positive feedback and . . .

with a clear framework of expectations about when they could talk, when they needed to listen and when they had to work in silence . . .

. . . their behaviour was much better.

Amy reflected:

“ As soon as I saw the class with Mr X I realized that they could behave and do their work. I had observed them before I started teaching them but somehow hadn't registered what they were like with other people. It was only when I went back and reflected on the difference in their behaviour with a teacher who had a different approach that I realized I might be able to do something about things after all. This was a key learning moment for me. Now, I understand about the

Table 9.1 A framework for reflection on learning objectives

	<i>If you are part way through your teacher training</i>	<i>If you have almost completed your teacher training</i>	<i>If you are an NQT</i>
1 Starting from experience	Were the learning objectives appropriate? What happened during the lesson to provide you with evidence of this? What evidence do you have that learning took place? What experiences have you had in previous lessons that might inform this lesson?	Were the learning objectives appropriate? What evidence did you look for to ascertain whether the learning objectives were met? What evidence do you have of this?	Were the learning objectives appropriate? What evidence do you have that all learners were engaged? Was there a different response from learners of different abilities? Why was this?
2 Starting from practical wisdom	How well did learners engage? How do you think your learners felt when you presented the learning objectives? How did they react? Did all learners have the same reaction? How has this gone in other lessons, and what have you learned from that?	How well did learners engage? How did you feel about the learning objectives? How did the learners feel when you assessed them against the learning objectives? How did they respond?	How well did learners engage? How did you feel as you were presenting/demonstrating/questioning the whole class? How do you think the class felt? How did they react? How did you feel when learners were working independently or in pairs? How do you think they felt? How did they react?

Table 9.1 (Continued)

	<i>If you are part way through your teacher training</i>	<i>If you have almost completed your teacher training</i>	<i>If you are an NQT</i>
3 Starting from theory	<p>How realistic were your expectations of pupils of different abilities? What is the ability range of this class? What are their attainment levels in this subject? What would you expect most learners to be able to learn and do in this lesson? What would more able learners be able to learn and do in addition? What support do less able learners need to meet the core objectives? Do any learners have a specific learning difficulty and special need? Did you address this when planning the outcomes?</p>	<p>How realistic were your expectations of pupils of different abilities? How well do you know this class? Do you need to go back to the questions in column 1? What formative and summative assessment strategies did you use to ascertain whether the learning objectives were met? How did you monitor the engagement of learners during tasks?</p>	<p>How realistic were your expectations of pupils of different abilities? How well do you know this class? Do you need to go back to the questions in column 1? What formative and summative assessment strategies did you use to ascertain whether the learning objectives were met? How did you monitor the engagement of learners during tasks? What were the learning outcomes for all abilities? What does this mean for your future planning? Were the tasks congruent with the learning objectives?</p>

value of being strict but fair and respectful. I don't get it right all the time, but this class is much better already and I can see that my planning and preparation are worthwhile because they are enjoying my lessons now.

(Amy, one-year PGCE MFL, week 2 of first teaching practice) ”

Reflective task 9.3 Reflecting on behaviour management

Refer to Figures 9.1 and 9.2. Starting from any one point on the triangle, use the questions in Table 9.2 to reflect on a lesson that you have taught recently where behaviour had a negative impact on learning. You must go through all the points on the triangle!

From the framework in Table 9.2 we can see the relationship between behaviour and learning. A key fact of classroom life is this: pupils cannot learn if they are not behaving, but they will not behave if they are not learning. As a beginning teacher you learn how to plan, how to differentiate, how to set up tasks, how to monitor and assess learning and so on. You also learn that rules and routines, **sanctions and rewards**, are necessary for good behaviour management. Through reflection, you can learn how to bring these elements together. Once you can do this, your teaching will be more or less successful, depending on context and the stage of your development. Where it is less successful, you need to be able to deconstruct your lessons in order to identify what you can do to make things better. Often, a slight change will make a big difference; the trick is in recognizing what that small change should be. The Lunenberg and Korthagen triangle (2009) is really useful here. Let us imagine that your well-planned lesson was unsuccessful because learners arrived 'high as kites' from assembly with little inclination to work, and chattered through the lesson, failing to engage with much of what you tried to get them to do. You know what happened in the lesson, and you might have a little moan about it with a colleague at break. You have entered the triangle from experience. You also know how you feel about it. However, if the reflection stops there, you will not really be on the road to solving the problem. By taking the practical wisdom aspect a stage further and asking yourself what effect your words and actions had on the class, you can begin to see the lesson from the learners' perspective. By applying your curriculum and pedagogic knowledge, you can then begin to analyse the relationship between behaviour and learning. From here,

Table 9.2 A framework for reflection on behaviour management

	<i>If you are part way through your teacher training</i>	<i>If you have almost completed your teacher training</i>	<i>If you are an NQT</i>
1 Starting from experience			
	How did learners behave during this lesson?		
	What happened when they entered the classroom? How long did it take them to settle? Was the disruption low or high level? Who was disruptive? Were there any 'ringleaders'? What did you do about this? What was the response from the class/individual?		
	What happened during question/answer sessions? Did pupils listen to you and to each other?		
	How much work was accomplished? Were the learning outcomes achieved?		
	Have you taught lessons that have started promptly and smoothly in the past? What contributed to this? What are your personal values about discipline and control? Do they match those of the school?		
2 Starting from practical wisdom			
	How did you and your learners respond?		
	How did you feel when your learners arrived in the classroom/as you were starting the lesson? What did you do? How do you think this made your learners feel? How did they respond? How did you react to behaviour problems as they arose during the lesson? How did this make you feel? What effect did this have on the class as a whole and on any individuals? Were there any positive moments where what you said or did resulted in a more settled atmosphere? Overall, did the lesson interest, engage and motivate the class? Were they aware of what learning had taken place? What evidence did they have of this?		

3 Starting from
theory

What rules and routines did you have in place to meet, greet and seat the class? What expectations did you have in your head about their behaviour? Did you communicate them to the class? How? How did you plan the routines for giving out and collecting resources and equipment? What routines did you have for keeping pupils on task? Were they allowed to talk or not when they were working? Did you convey this expectation to them? How long did you expect learners to take over each task? Did you impose this time limit on them? How did you monitor their work once they had started a task? To what extent did you use praise and rewards? To what extent did you threaten sanctions? Were they realistic? Did you carry out any threatened sanctions? What routines did you have for dismissing the class?

What expectations did you have of this class in respect of behaviour and learning? Were they realistic? (See column 1.) What understanding did you have of prior learning? Were your learning objectives realistic? Were they appropriately differentiated? Were learners clear about what they were learning and why? Did the tasks and activities relate well to the learning objectives? Did you demonstrate and model the tasks and activities clearly? Did you provide a variety of learning opportunities, for example collaborative learning, individual work? Did you use a range of questioning techniques? Did you give pupils thinking time? How well were your questions differentiated? Did you target your questions at individuals? Was your subject knowledge secure? Did you structure the learning appropriately? What sort of questions did learners ask? Were you confident about answering them? What proportion of the lesson was teacher led? How appropriate was this?

How well do I know this class? To what extent do you need to consider the questions in columns 1 and 2? To what extent are your expectations of this class congruent with the whole-school policies on behaviour and learning? What is the whole school/department policy on monitoring and assessment? Did you use appropriate assessment for learning strategies during this lesson? To what extent do you embrace collaborative working practices to ensure a safe and consistent learning environment for all learners? Did you apply your pedagogic knowledge to this lesson, for example the principles of good practice in teaching this subject, learning styles and strategies, differentiation strategies and supporting special needs?

Pupils can't learn if they're not behaving . . . but they won't behave if they're not learning!

you can take small steps to achieve big improvements. For example, you may become aware that you are not setting a time limit for tasks, and start to do so. After all, learners will take as long as you give them to get something done, plus a little longer still! Or you may not be making clear when they may work collaboratively ('quiet partner voices') and when they must work independently ('silent individual work'). Or maybe you are expecting them to be silent for far too long, so they are not silent at all! Only through detailed reflection can such things be unearthed, and once they come to the surface you can deal with them. Another example of detailed reflection can be seen in Case Study 9.4.

Case Study 9.4 Avoiding shouting out

When Joseph's university tutor observed a lesson towards the end of his first teaching practice, she noted the following in her written feedback:

“ I can sense your frustration as you try to deal with pupils calling out answers to your questions, and you are starting to let this show. ”

In the verbal feedback that followed, the following dialogue took place between Joseph and his tutor:

Joseph Yes, I was feeling frustrated. They are so enthusiastic; they all want to talk at once!

Tutor All? Are you sure all of them were answering?

Joseph Mmmm. Well now you mention it, maybe it is the same kids every time.

Tutor So what were the others doing?

Joseph Listening, I guess. I'm not sure. . .

Tutor Do you think everyone achieved the learning objectives?

Joseph I think so. They could all answer the questions ok.

Tutor But you've just said only some were answering questions.

Joseph Well, the class teacher says some of them are not very confident.

Tutor So what could you do to give them more confidence?

Joseph I need to ask questions they can answer. But the problem is that the others just shout out the answers.

From this circular discussion, the tutor went on to elicit from Joseph how his open, blanket questioning was inviting shouted responses; he was not targeting his questions at individuals. He admitted that once he got a correct answer from somewhere in the room he moved on, allowing himself to believe that the class was now clear about that

point. What is more, he could see that because learners got away with shouting out, their general behaviour deteriorated as the lesson progressed. His tutor negotiated a two-pronged strategy to help Joseph. First, he had to establish a classroom rule: no shouting out. This needed to be backed up with clear and consistent routines discussed with his mentor: *listen carefully to the question; think about the answer; put your hand up if you know the answer. I will choose someone to answer. Listen carefully to the answer given.* Second, he needed to think about how to structure and differentiate questioning. This way he could target closed questions to less able or less confident learners and more open questions to more able learners.

This reflection drew on Lunenberg and Korthagen's triangle (2009, see Figure 9.3) in a way that helped Joseph understand his own frustration, have

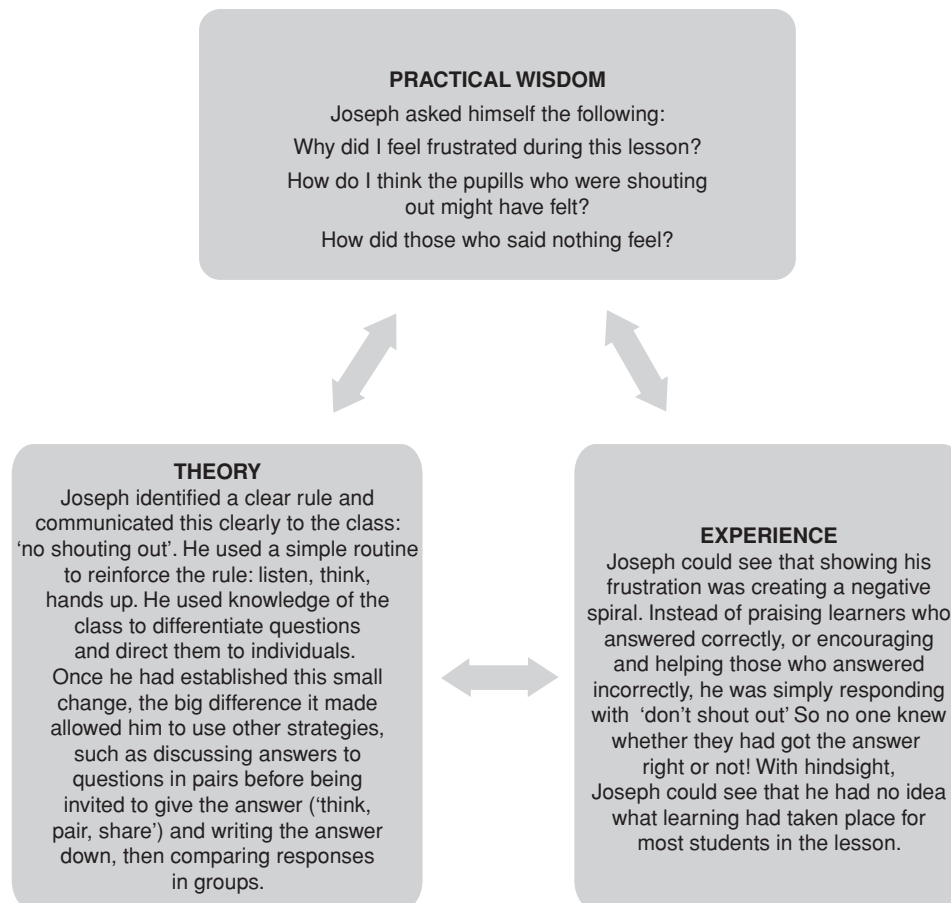


Figure 9.3 Joseph's reflecting on his questioning techniques

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insight into how the class might be feeling, and learn from the experience by applying pedagogic knowledge in the form of theories he was learning in university and conversations with his tutor and mentor.

In his reflective journal at the end of his first teaching practice, Joseph wrote:

“ A key learning moment for me was when my tutor pointed out that 'blanket' questions tell you very little about who knows what in your classroom. Once I learned to differentiate the questions I asked and direct them to individual children, I got a much better picture of this. Because I stopped allowing them to shout out behaviour was better and the classroom was much calmer. Also, I could praise the kids who didn't have much confidence and I could challenge the most able with harder questions. ”

Reflective task 9.4 Reflecting on questioning

Refer to Figures 9.1 and 9.2. Starting from any one point on the triangle, use the questions in Table 9.3 to reflect on the quality and impact of your questioning in a lesson you taught recently. You must go through all the points on the triangle!

From the above, you should have a much more detailed picture of how you used questioning in the lesson, how your actions made you feel and the likely effect on the class, based on individual and group reactions. This you can probably do alone (provided you are honest with yourself). However, when it comes to the detail of how to improve, you need to draw on:

- all the resources available to you in school, including the careful observation of more experienced colleagues;
- established curriculum and pedagogic knowledge in the form of learning theory, subject pedagogy, national frameworks for teaching and assessment, and so on.

For this you will need, as Lunenberg and Korthagen point out (2009: 238) the expertise of university- and school-based tutors to help you make the connection between experience, theory and practical wisdom, and to develop your own insight into these connections. If you are lucky enough to be working in what Hodkinson

Table 9.3 A framework for reflection on questioning

	<i>If you are part way through your teacher training</i>	<i>If you have almost completed your teacher training</i>	<i>If you are an NQT</i>
1 Starting from experience	<p>What happened during question/answer sessions? How did learners respond? Who was engaged in answering questions? Who remained silent? How much shouting out was there? What did you do about this?</p>	<p>How well did you differentiate? Were all pupils appropriately challenged through questioning? How do you know this? What did the answers tell you about what learning had taken place? Have you conducted successful questioning with other classes? What did you learn from this?</p>	<p>How well did you relate the questions to the lesson objectives? Were learners aware of why you were questioning them? Were they aware of what the responses told them about their learning?</p>
2 Starting from practical wisdom	<p>What was the learning climate like? Can you address every learner by name? How did you feel during question/answer sessions? How do you think your learners felt? Do you think everyone felt valued and included during this lesson? Did you praise correct responses? How sensitively did you deal with incorrect responses?</p>	<p>Reflecting on action Can you identify one incident during the lesson where you felt particularly confident about your questioning? What contributed to this?</p>	<p>Can you identify one example from the lesson where you may have enhanced the confidence of one of your learners? What contributed to this?</p>

Table 9.3 (Continued)

	<i>If you are part way through your teacher training</i>	<i>If you have almost completed your teacher training</i>	<i>If you are an NQT</i>
3 Starting from theory	<p>What questions did you ask? Did you prepare them in advance? What did you want them to tell you about the learning of individual pupils? What did they tell you about the extent to which learners achieved the lesson objectives?</p> <p>How did you direct your questions? Did you differentiate your questions? How did you question the most and the least able? How did you use questioning to build learner confidence? How did you feed back to learners, for example praise, encouragement, linking answers to the lesson objectives?</p>	<p>How did you vary your questioning technique? Did you encourage written as well as oral answers? Did you encourage learners to discuss their answers in pairs and small groups? Did they have opportunities to present their answers, for example through sticky notes or mini presentations? Did you provide opportunities for learners to rethink their responses to questions, and redraft written work?</p>	<p>Did you use questioning to explore prior learning? What do learners already know about this? Did you plan questioning to elicit their prior knowledge, acquired both formally and informally? Were you able to ascertain any misconceptions in order to 'deconstruct' them during your teaching?</p> <p>Did you use multiple questions to elicit and/or establish understanding? Were you aware of the <i>meta-cognitive</i> as well as the <i>cognitive</i> skills they were developing? Did you attempt to make your learners aware of these?</p>

and Hodkinson (2005, in Simkins, 2009) have called an ‘expansive learning environment’ this will be relatively easy. This is because such schools recognize the value that professional development brings to the organization, and therefore place a high value on individual development. Such schools are likely to have an ethos where issues like those in the case studies above are frequently addressed at formal and informal levels through ‘learning conversations’, and coaches and mentors are well trained in supporting beginning teachers to address such questions. If you are less fortunate, you may need to turn to other sources for help (see Chapter 5 for more on this). Many training providers ‘unpack’ the professional standards, providing performance indicators of each one. Ofsted (2009a) has published descriptors of each grade (outstanding, good, satisfactory and inadequate) as exemplified by trainees in a variety of contexts: their teaching, their teaching files and in their ‘explanations’, that is, written and verbal communication with tutors and mentors (Appendix 2). In Appendix 3 there is an example of how working with ‘progression grids’ can lead to reflective conversations about where you are at any point in your development and where you need to go next. By using these and similar frameworks you will be able to take your busy but no less willing mentor with you on a journey of exploration through the reflective triangle.

Summary

This chapter has encouraged you to recognize the value of detailed reflection on small parts of your practice in order to make improvements that will ultimately have a major positive impact on how you act as a professional and gain what Lunenberg and Korthagen (2009) have called ‘practical wisdom’. Through a number of case studies, the relationship between theory, practice and practical wisdom has been explored, and frameworks for developing detailed reflection on three key aspects of teaching have been provided. In developing frameworks for detailed reflection in other aspects, the reader should engage in an exploration of key questions with university- and school-based experts.

Conclusion

Beginning teachers often slip into a very generalized approach to reflection; they try to examine the whole; whereas the focus often needs to be on the parts that make up the whole. By using the frameworks proposed here to address some of the key aspects of your practice at a micro level, you will be able to develop strategies for reflecting on and improving other areas, thus taking little steps towards a much improved bigger picture.

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Key learning points

- Transitions in your professional life, such as changing school or key stage, can lead to what feels like a decline in professional skills.
- Requirements constantly to evaluate your practice can lead to superficial reflection.
- Deep and focused reflection on every aspect of your professional life is not possible. By identifying what is really important at any given point, and reflecting in detail on small aspects of your work, you can ultimately make a significant difference to the bigger picture.
- Using frameworks for reflection can help you to focus on what is important to you in the here and now.
- In this way, you can use your experience to apply 'practical wisdom' in new contexts, so that transitions become easier over time.