

Fresh contexts and Reflective Practice: Should we reconceptualise reflection in Initial Teacher Education and Training

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Basic Argument

- (a) The contexts for reflection in initial teacher education have changed rapidly in the last five years.
- (b) The need for reflection remains a critical component for effective practice.
- (c) Reflection-in-Action (Schon 1983) remains constant despite the changing contexts.
- (d) Reflection-on-Action(Schon 1983) needs to be reconceptualised.

To what extent are the changing contexts in initial teacher education significant for reflective practice?

- (a) Within primary education:
- Early Years
 - Every Child Matters/Youth Matters
 - Primary National Strategy
 - Workforce Reform
 - New Technology



Technology

- Digital natives (millennials) v. digital immigrants (Prensky in Walter, 2006)
- Collaborative and corrected
- Multi-tasking
- Expecting instant responses
- Hurry-along-Curriculum (Dadds 1995) and Hurry-along-Learning

To what extent are the changing contexts in initial teacher education significant for reflective practice?

- (a) Within initial teacher education itself:
- A move away from an over-atomistic approach
 - A re-acceptance of the importance of reflection
 - The proliferation of routes
 - The emergence of 'M' level PGCEs
 - The changing student circumstance, particularly financial circumstance

Push and Pull Factors for Reflection

Eg.

- A loosening of the requirements for the NLS and the NNS balanced against ...
a tougher financial environment for students

Eg.

- A move away from an over-atomised approach to standards and requirements balanced against ...
the impact of technology

Eg.

- The emergence of 'M' level PGCEs balanced against ...
the creation of time and space for reflection

Some Theoretical Considerations

- (a) Reflection
- (b) Intuition
- (c) Ecology



Reflection

- (a) Reflection-in-action and Reflection-on-action (Schon 1983)
- (b) Reflection-for-action (Eraut 1995)
- (c) Levels of reflection (McIntyre 1993)
 - technical
 - practical
 - critical/emancipatory



Intuition (Eraut 2000)

- (a) Contexts for intuition
 - problem solving
 - decision making
 - learning
 - assessing situations
- (f) Intuitive processes
 - insight through connecting different areas of knowledge
 - sensing new aspects of the situation
 - recognising familiar patterns
 - rapidly deciding on an option to respond to a changing context

“... When quick decisions or rapid action are required, a large part of the knowledge synthesis process must have already occurred, perhaps over a series of fairly similar occasions.”
(Eraut 2000, p. 258)



Ecology

- Multi-dimensionality
- Simultaneity
- Unpredictability (Doyle 1977)
- Activity ambiguity

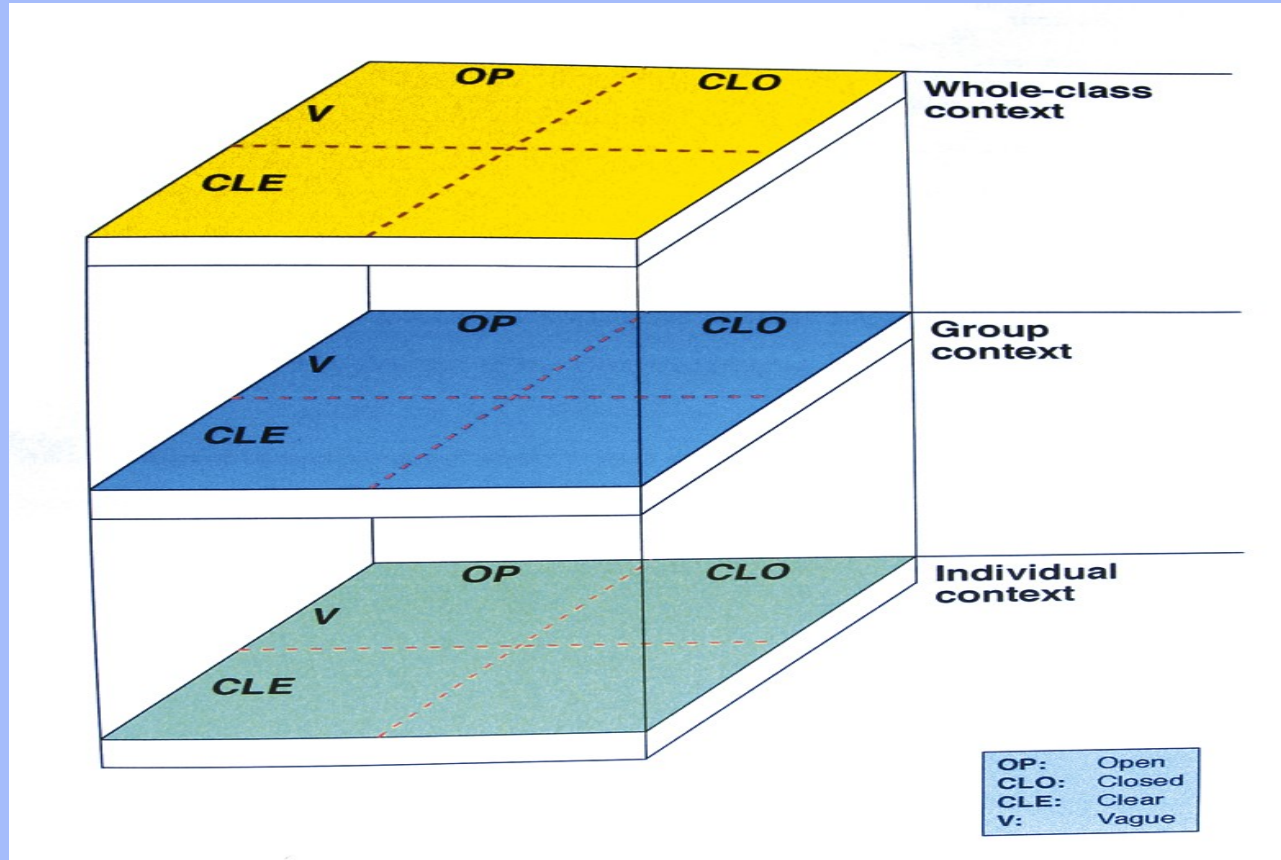


Dimensions of Activity Ambiguity (i)

	OPEN	CLOSED
C L E A R		
V A G U E		

Simco (1998)

Dimensions of Activity Ambiguity (ii)



Simco (1998)

Moving Towards a Proposal (i)

- In ITE students are most focused on level 1 and 2 reflection
- This links with a clear focus on reflection-in-action
- Reflection-in-action is a rapid response to the classroom ecology
- Intuition takes time and experience to create
- For beginning teachers reflection-in-action occurs without intuition
- Effective and spontaneous reflection-in-action is required for survival

Moving Towards a Proposal (ii)

- Reflection-in-action is only marginally related to the impact of changing contexts, with the exception of technology
- Once intuition is built up (over 2-3 years?) the focus turns to reflection-on-action
- The impact of the changing contexts becomes much more profound at this stage

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