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An embodied perspective on judgements of written reflective practice for professional development in Higher Education

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An embodied perspective on judgements of written reflective practice for professional development in Higher Education

This paper gives an embodied perspective on the use of judgements of reflective practice and reflective writing for professional development in Higher Education. Programmes for professional development in Higher Education and recognition processes for academics have become prevalent in the UK and internationally. These programmes and processes often assume, implicitly or explicitly, development or evidencing as a 'reflective practitioner' through pieces of reflective writing which is then judged against competencies or attainments. However, this focus on reflective practice and reflective writing is not always critical, and does not examine the different theoretical and practical interpretations of what it means to reflect, nor the impact of assessing such reflections. Taking an embodied stance allows a new view into a contested area that is more habitually connected with cognitive rather than corporeal processes.

Keywords: reflective practice; embodied; professional development

From the context of an embodied practitioner

Reflective practice and reflective writing have become intrinsic within professional practice education and programmes within the UK and internationally. Judgements of reflective writing are used to recognise attainment of certain qualities in programmes for professional development. If reflective practice stems from philosophy (Ryan M. , 2011), most particularly the work of Dewey (1933), then much of the critical approaches to it, and of judgement of it, are also rooted in a Cartesian, disembodied framework that dissociates mind from body, and privileges one over the other.

As a lecturer in Higher Education and Academic Practice teaching on a programme for professional development and an experienced somatic therapist, I have developed an embodied reflexive practice which informs my perceptions and understandings. I use the information from my senses (touch, smell, kinaesthesia,

proprioception, sight, imagination, hearing, imagery and internal awareness) to feed into a reflective and reflexive process of understanding myself, the world that surrounds me and others that move within the world. I view my body as the embodiment of me, the physical expression of me within this world. As such I can train, exercise, express and create with it and through it. My reflexive process is “rooted in experiences of ...[my]...kinetic/tactile-kinesthetic...[body]” (Sheets-Johnstone, 2010, p. 112). The exactness of language, and the nature by which language can express the experience of my embodied self forms a part of the practice itself. My practice combines the embodied forms in which I have experience; primarily yoga (Pattabhi Jois, 1999), Authentic Movement (Adler, 2002) and Integrative Bodywork and Movement Therapy (Hartley, 1989), as well as a background in science, education and research. I have applied this work as an on-going process in my life but also with infants, families, artists, dancers, athletes, education and health professionals, and with children as part of their school day. An embodied perspective can enrich traditional theories (Meier, Schnall, & Schwarz, 2012), although it has not often been present (Evans, Davies, & Rich, 2009).

I believe that the effectiveness of a reflective practice depends on the data on which the practitioner has to reflect. She needs to be able to pick up on how, when and in what manner what she does impacts on the environment and the people within it, to be aware of how she feels and holds herself within a given situation. This relates directly to my understanding and utilisation of embodiment. For reflective practice I believe that the teacher’s attention is focused both inwardly at their own practice, and outwardly at the group around them (Kemmis, 1985). It is the inward focus that I believe vital, as in order to achieve it a practitioner has to access all of the information available to her through her physical body and senses. If she is conscious of her body

processes, and the environment around her she will have a greater resource on which to analyse and reflect. If she is aware of her own emotions, and her bodily experience of these, it will make her more open to the emotions of her students thus enabling her to be a more sensitive and effective teacher (Burke, 2015). There are many different ways to reflect “including through discussion..., writing in a journal ... {or} ... through poetry, song, story, painting or dance” (Hickson, 2011, p. 830). Embodied reflective practice can be compared to using mindfulness in psychotherapeutic treatment, in that it is not a tool, but “requires an attitude and process...It also requires that the therapist immerses herself in its practice so that its spirit and effects come to life” (Weiss, 2009, p. 13). Mindfulness, along with other embodied practices, can allow thoughts, feelings and emotions to be observed non-judgementally. This can support critical reflexivity and other professional practice (McCorquodale, 2015). However, an embodied practice is not a guarantee that reflection will be effective. Reflection can have difficulties even for dance students who one might expect to be ‘embodied’ (Leijen, Lam, Wilschut, & Simons, 2009).

In this paper I intend to explore the focus on reflective practice and reflective writing within programmes for professional development within Higher Education (HE), different interpretations and theoretical practices of reflective practice, and the impact of judging an individual’s reflective writing, all from the perspective of an embodied reflexive practitioner.

The focus on reflective practice in professional programmes

What is the purpose of reflective practice? While it is still a “contested model of professional development” (Fanghanel, 2012, p. 36), it has for a long time been seen as a vital and underlying component of professional education (Bourner, 2003; Brookfield, 1995; Capel et al, 2005; Kreber et al, 2001; Leigh & Bailey, 2013; Pollard, 2002).

Whilst the importance of reflective practice is widely accepted in principle, and the use of reflective tasks has been shown to provide teachers with opportunities to explore their own practice (Karm, 2010), what actually is construed as effective, critical reflection is often loosely defined (Hatton & Smith, 1995). The importance of a clear definition of what it means to be reflective, and what reflection actually is, is vital when it is used within any assessed programme, or any context where writing is to be judged. Reflexivity implies that an individual takes time to reflect on and analyse her actions and awareness of herself, and then uses those insights to improve her practice (Leigh, 2012). The most useful understanding of reflexivity and reflectivity is not to position them as different, but instead to see them both as core components of a critical reflective practice (Griggs, Holden, Rae, & Lawless, 2015). This focus on self-awareness and personal development can be crucial to a successful pedagogic programme (Trevitt & Perera, 2009). Without reflexivity the reflection does not necessarily lead to a change in practice, although the terms are often used interchangeably within education. However, for any given individual, a reflective practice can mean something different. Their perceptions are personal and subjective to them.

Whilst there is a lack of consensus about the nature and desirability of reflective practice, there is much agreement that the rhetoric of the reflective practitioner has become important within Higher Education (HE) for the academic and professional development of new academics. Reflection is part of professions more traditionally seen as 'helping', such as counselling, social work and nursing (Mirick & Davis, 2015; McAndrew & Roberts, 2015), as well as teacher education (Pollard, 2002). However, many of these professions emphasise technical competencies and give little attention to critical or reflective expertise (Bain, 1995; Leigh & Bailey, 2013), or have only

relatively recently seen the value in reflective practice and the importance of including it as part of training or professional development (Roberts, 2002; Driessen, van Tartwijk, & Dornan, 2008). This lack of definitional clarity limits widespread implementation. This is a perennial concern with reflective practices, as even in ethnographic research, in which the reflexive researcher is central (Pink, 2009), questions of how researchers are to acquire this reflexivity is “hardly discussed” (ibid p. 50). It is an area that has not necessarily been “interrogated with the kind of rigour that practitioners in Higher Education would normally apply to their own disciplines” (Bleakley, 1999, p. 315).

There has been an emphasis on ‘developing reflective practitioners’ as part of a national and international focus on improving teaching within HE. Within the context of professional development, reflective practice is seen by some as the “favoured paradigm for professional development” (Clegg, Tan, & Saedidi, 2002, p. 131). In the UK it is “widely employed across Higher Education” (Kahn, et al., 2008, p. 161), and a dominant model across the rest of the sector (Bleakley, 1999; Kreber, 2014). In South Africa, Van Schalkwyk et al (2012) found it was necessary for university teachers to “adopt a reflective approach to their work” (p. 2) and emphasised the importance of reflective writing as part of professional development. However, in New Zealand, Prebble et al (2004) concluded that staff programmes which advocated the development of reflective practitioners showed “no evidence that teachers were making decisions on the basis of reflection rather than convention” (ibid, p9).

Not all authors agree that reflection is desirable. There are widely reported difficulties with teaching reflection (Russell, 2005; Smith, 2011). Reflective practice has been associated with a ‘dark side’ (Hickson, 2011) that “can result in people being seduced by their own stories and beliefs” (p832).

Some authors have claimed that university teaching, just like teaching in schools, has changed enormously over the last 30 years, with an increased importance placed on high quality and effective teaching (Glaister & Glaister, 2013; Gibbs, 2013; Clegg S. , 2009). Teaching in HE, that is the act of teaching, the quality of teaching and the qualifications of those teaching, has come under increasing scrutiny in the UK since the late 1990s, in part due to the consumerisation of HE (Williams, 2013), and the significant increase in part-time teachers (Beaton & Gilbert, 2012) including post-graduates who teach (Beaton, Bradley, & Cope, 2013). There has also been a recognition that ‘good’ researchers do not necessarily make ‘good’ teachers (Brookfield, 1995). There have been calls for the teaching in HE Institutions (HEIs) to be improved around the world (Knight P. , 2006; High Level Group on the Modernisation of Higher Education, 2013), and there has been a renewed interest in HE teaching qualifications within the sector in the UK since it has become mandatory for HEIs in the UK to report on the numbers of staff with teaching qualifications (HEFCE, 2013).

Such teaching qualifications often form part of professional or academic development programmes offered to staff. A common sense understanding (as there is no consensus) of a ‘good’ outcome of professional development in this area might be that academics become or are ‘good’ university teachers (Leibowitz et al, 2009). However, professional and academic development are not unambiguous terms. The term professional development can be used to describe any number of activities that contribute towards developing professionally, from reading a book, an article, to attending a conference, or having a stimulating discussion with a colleague. Similarly, academic development could mean any development that results in an academic gain

(e.g. completion of an academic course that may or may not be for academic credit), or that results in an individual developing as an academic within the academy as a whole.

The emphasis on teaching in programmes for academic development is verified by frameworks such as that of the UK's Higher Education Academy (HEA) Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF) for teaching and supporting learning in Higher Education (HEA, 2011a). Through Fellowship of the HEA, individuals are said to gain "national recognition of... commitment to professionalism in teaching and learning in Higher Education" (HEA, 2011b), (it should be noted that there are different requirements at different Fellowship levels – for example demonstrating leadership becomes more significant at the higher levels). As part of this process they complete a reflective account of professional practice (HEA, 2011c). The HEA produced guidance on 'becoming a reflective practitioner' (Brigden & Purcell, 2012). They identified reflection being of use to "relate theory to practice", and stated that 'evidence based practice needs to...build on reflective practice.'" The HEA's adoption of reflective writing to prove and demonstrate attainment and professional development is not new to education, although it has a very specific focus on individual performance.

Alternatively, individuals can complete an HEA accredited professional development provision. Accreditation is awarded to initial and continuing professional development programmes delivered by HEIs on confirmation that the provision is aligned with the UKPSF (HEA, 2011d). The pressure on HEIs to provide HEA accredited frameworks is manifold, including the requirements to provide numbers of qualified teachers, the need to attract undergraduate students with high numbers of 'qualified teachers', the need to provide postgraduate students with a comprehensive package of development opportunities and qualifications in addition to a PhD, and not least the need to provide

staff in learning support roles and both teaching and scholarship and teaching and research career pathways a framework for development, progression and promotion.

When reflective practice becomes part of the accepted discourse of professional development, it then becomes very difficult for an alternative discourse of professional development to be persuasive (Edwards & Nicoll, 2006). One pedagogical perspective is put forward as the only perspective, and professional development becomes about providing opportunities for this. As the reflective practitioner becomes naturalised with the good practitioner, to challenge the notion of reflective practice becomes unprofessional. An example of this rhetoric can be found in an HEA report examining the effectiveness of reflective practices in programmes for new academic staff (Kahn et al., 2008). Khan et al conducted a grounded practitioner review of research literature. As part of this process it might be expected that the authors would be explicit about their assumptions, and positions, particularly given that as practitioners they not only selected the literature that was included, but provided a commentary. It seems that the authors were paying lip service to at least one idea of reflection, without a critical discussion of why they had chosen not to include it, demonstrating a lack of theoretical rigour.

The discourse of reflective practice is wide and varied, and neither Brigden and Purcell (2012) nor Kahn and colleagues (2008) writing for the HEA acknowledge this. It encompasses technical and cognitive approaches to reflection as well as holistic and embodied approaches. A more critical and reflective approach to reflective practice for the academic and professional development of new academics, particularly when it is to be judged for academic and professional development and competency, seems sensible. Different interpretations of reflective practice are discussed in the next section.

Theoretical practices and interpretations of reflective practice

The idea of becoming truly and effectively reflective relates to the idea of embodying a skill and then being able to model it for others. Dewey (1933), one of the early pioneers of reflective practice, identified four issues within its pedagogy that need addressing:

“[1]whether reflection is limited to thought process about action or is inextricably bound up in action...[2]whether reflection is immediate and short term or ...extended and systematic...[3]whether reflection is by its very nature problem-centred or not...[and 4] how consciously the one reflecting takes account of wider...values and beliefs in framing...practical problems.”
(Hatton & Smith, 1995, p. 34)

These questions may be answered in different ways, depending on the interpretation used to define what constitutes reflective practice. People reflect in many different ways (Ryan, 2011). Most current definitions of reflection, although sometimes vague or confused, tend towards analytical, critical and problem solving approaches. An embodied approach to reflective practice (Leigh & Bailey, 2012) would imply that the process of reflection should allow a sense of order to be brought to the descriptions of the experiences, and for them to be brought into conscious awareness. It is not enough simply to have an experience and then think about it, “contemplating an experience or event is not always purposeful and does not necessarily lead to new ways of thinking or behaving in practice and thus is not considered to be reflection” (Miles, 2011, unpagged). Similarly, Weiss states that “mental reflection is a very dubious process, always prone to bend and distort towards social desirability, defence of our behaviour, and habitual thought patterns” (Weiss, 2009, p. 9). Interestingly, Brown and Ryan (2003) consider that reflexive thought has little or no relation to ‘mindfulness’, which they believe concerns “the quality of consciousness itself” (Brown & Ryan, 2003, p. 823), that is, a purely intellectual activity and not one associated with the body at all. This view would

be shared by Biesta (1994) who believes that educational theory is rooted in the paradigm of consciousness.

The idea of reflective practice within professional education at least draws heavily on the work of Schön, (b1930 – d1997) who was an influential thinker in the field of education and professional development. Schön attempted to develop an epistemology of practice based on the activity of professionals, and his work related to learning systems within communities and organisations and reflective practice for professionals (Argyris & Schön, 1974; Schön, 1971; 1982; 1987a; 1987b; 1995). He was trained as a philosopher and a musician and used a pragmatic framework to shape his work. Schön's notion of artistry implies that the 'body' and 'passion' of lived experience are part of reflective practice. He appears to draw on phenomenological ideas of reflection, and yet this definition would necessarily exclude his notion of reflection-in-action. The theoretical notions from Schön have been interpreted and developed in different directions. Bleakley (1999) terms the grounding of reflection with experience as 'holistic' reflexivity, and cites it as the moving of focus from the introspective to an attention to the world. Whilst agreeing that 'practice artistry' is preferable to a 'technical solution', Bleakley (1999) argues that Schön failed to develop formally his notion of reflective practice as an 'artistry'. This word implied that it was not the technical rationality that is important, but that instead fresh insights should be brought to bear on the matter (Tremmel, 1993). Tremmel believes that a misunderstanding of Schön's concepts may explain why those in education often struggle with a lack of articulated structures for reflection and reflection-in-action. A critical feminist perspective on Schön's reflective practice is offered by Clegg (1999), illustrated by her own experience of participation in reflective practice within professional development in HE. Reflection can be described as having "moved from

scrutinizing what professionals do to a concentration on language” (Clegg, 1999, p. 177). This is particularly relevant when there is assessment of reflective writing.

Where reflection loses its grounding in the senses, feelings and emotions of the self, it can lead to a loss of connection with the world and an anesthetising to others, and the needs of others (Bleakley, 1999). This would further increase the possibility of dissociating the reflective process, designed to increase effectiveness and performance, from impacting on self-development or improving professional practice. Van Manen (1995) discusses the epistemology of reflection-in-action and after the event primarily in terms of thinking and thought processes rather than embodiment, although he says to be effective one is able to be aware, and to have a sense of instant knowing that issues from the body and the world around the body rather than an organised critical and analytical process.

A more embodied understanding of reflective practice used within professional development in HE draws explicitly on the phenomenology of embodiment of Merleau-Ponty (1945/2002). Merleau-Ponty stated that “reflection is truly reflection only if it is not carried outside itself, only if it knows itself as reflection-on-an-unreflective-experience, and consequently as a change in structure of our existence” (ibid., p. 72). In other words, reflection has to be conscious, it happens *after* an experience, and not in the midst of it. By reflecting on an event, we can affect change. We can perceive that experience differently, and we can change how we act or react to experiences in the future as a consequence of our reflections. The idea that experience is not purely a result of discourse, but arises from what is lived as well as what is spoken or written, is an argument put forward by post-modern and feminist authors (Clegg, 1999). Drawing on Merleau-Ponty, Smears (2009) states that reflexivity is a way to regain control over our personal world, which can bring self-confidence. By engaging with the body to

achieve a greater embodied awareness, she claims that we can develop an effective, useful practice that does not degenerate into rumination, uncertainty, questions and a diminishing of self. This argument has consequences for reflective practice and reflexivity, as one understanding of Schön's concepts of reflective practice is that experience is not reducible to discourse, and reflective practice cannot be reduced to language (Smears, 2009).

The relationship between language and reflection is important, as "reflexivity is offered through language" (Bleakley, 1999, p. 326). It is through language that we fashion our identities and bring the world into presence. It is possible to take an embodied approach to reflexivity and to reflection (Sheets-Johnstone 2009; 2010a; 2010b), and this can then be used for professional development in HE (Leigh & Bailey, 2013; Smears, 2009). This notion is not considered by some authors. Instead, a rhetorical position is taken that 'gerrymanders' language to structure it into techniques or competences that can be applied to situations rather than embed it into professional practice (Edwards & Nicoll, 2006).

The effect of reflective practice is dependent on how it is introduced, and the intention behind it. For example, Ecclestone (1996) suggested that those new to teaching and reflection and participating on professional development courses should not engage with critical reflection, but instead use a combination of anecdotal teaching tips and have their competence judged against externally defined standards. Only as they develop should they be encouraged to become more reflective, and engage with theory and their own subjective reflections on their role. Ecclestone was critiquing the spread of reflective practice as a mantra within teacher education, however, this mode of approaching professional development would not result in a developing critical practice from the outset. Instead it relies on a linear developing model of competence,

and frames all reflection as a technical operation (Bleakley, 1999). This appears to be a contentious, yet perhaps pragmatic view of reflective practice. If reflection is purely about demonstrating competence and meeting requirements, then it is more likely that it becomes a technical game, a ‘mandated confessional’ (Macfarlane & Gourlay, 2009) rather than a means of developing self-awareness and increasing professionalism as advocated by Smears and myself (Leigh and Bailey, 2013).

Whilst there is a lack of consensus about the nature of reflective practice, there is much agreement that the rhetoric of the reflective practitioner has become important within HE, particularly for the academic and professional development of new academics. There is, however, limited engagement with the topic of how reflective practice in HE is different from reflective practice in any other discipline. There appears to be a consensus for a wider call for a more critical and reflective approach to reflective practice in HE, particularly when it is to be judged for academic and professional development.

Impact of judgement on reflective practice and reflective writing

When reflections are written, particularly when they are seen by an assessor, or someone who will judge them in any way, the use of language becomes relevant. The judgement of reflection does not test the gap between theory and practice which reflection is purported to bridge, but instead asks practitioners to reword the dominant espoused theory (Clegg, 1999). This is a concern shared by Macfarlane and Gourlay (2009) who described the judgement of reflection as being done “in a way that reinforces behavioural conformism” (p. 457) and so does not encourage a critical engagement with the topic. Instead, reflective writing becomes “little short of a confidence trick, or perhaps more worryingly, an exercise in self-justification and conformism with the psychologised curriculum of learning and teaching” (Macfarlane

& Gourlay, 2009). It is possible to teach students to 'improve' their reflective writing skills by modelling elements of a 'good' reflective account (Ryan, 2011). This does not necessarily facilitate effective reflection, and instead is more likely to result in a superficial process (Calderhead, 1989) rather than the practice of a lifetime (Tremmel, 1993). In a study that explicitly looked at perceptions of reflective practice for professional development within HE, Clegg and colleagues (2002) examined the language that participants used to identify types of reflection, and explored the relationships participants on professional development courses had to their experiences of assessed reflection. They identified four different ways that participants engaged with reflective practice that included action as well as reflection, and used these typologies of how individuals approach professional development to open out discussions of the role of reflective practice within professional development. They found that as the emphasis in reflective practice becomes more concerned with writing and language, reflective action becomes less prevalent, if not missing. This lack of action is significant, as it is through reflective action that professional practice becomes improved, and as such Clegg and colleagues recommend that care is taken to ensure that theoretical rigour is applied to how reflective practice is operationalized.

Judgement or assessment of reflective writing often emphasises the reflective and not the reflexive practitioner (Hoult, 2005). In order to facilitate a self-developmental reflexive process it would be necessary to "not sit in judgement as some sort of figure of authority" (Trevitt & Perera, 2009, p. 355) but rather approach it with a view of assessing its trustworthiness (Winter, 2002). Questions have arisen regarding the use of reflective practice as an assessment tool, in that educators can find "little agreement concerning what reflection actually is and how it might be encouraged" (McArdle & Coutts, 2003, p. 225). There also concerns regarding the robustness and

validity of assessing such assignments (Clarkeburn & Kettula, 2012) given the complexities of creating a robust assessment framework (Clarkeburn & Kettula, 2012; Smith, 2011). When reflective practice equates with reflective writing for an extrinsic purpose other than facilitating an individual's reflective process it can be described as having "moved from scrutinizing what professionals do to a concentration on language" (Clegg, 1999, p. 177). This is a concern shared by Macfarlane and Gourlay (2009) who liken a reflective assignment to a reality television show. Although this may be slightly tongue-in-cheek, the performative aspect of reflective writing is something that also needs to be considered with judgement of any kind. This has been considered for students by Ross (2014), who concludes that 'high-stakes' reflection, results in the authors being "extremely audience aware" (p. 219). They take strategic approaches in their reflective writing, thus undermining its authenticity. Ross also stated that "authors who specifically address high stakes reflection...have little enthusiasm for it" (p. 221).

The stark question of whether reflection should be judged at all has been addressed in the context of social work programmes (Ixer, 1999). Ixer considers reflection as not being "a competence...a measurable skill readily available to standard assessment criteria" (Ixer, 1999, p. 514). If this is true of social work, then how can it be assessed and measured as a competence in other professions? Such a concern does not seem relevant to many in discussions on reflective practice (Calderhead, 1989; Cole, 2000; Cordingley, 1999; Ferraro, 2000; Jay & Johnson, 2002). With more recent papers on the teaching of reflective practice and writing (Russell, 2005; Ryan, 2011; Smith, 2011) it could be easy for these concerns to get lost. One criticism of the discourse of competence, is that it focuses heavily and in an unreflective manner on what is done, rather than cognitive capacities (Edwards & Nicoll, 2006). Professionalism becomes the proving of competence. Reflection becomes necessary for continued competence.

However, an alternative methodology and theoretical basis that draws from post-modern feminist reflexivity and talks of reflection as a “philosophical bastion against the technicism” (italics added), is put forward by Clegg, Tan and Saedhi (2002), who state that this was in fact Schön’s original intention of reflective practice.

Conclusions

It seems that the drivers for academic and professional development continue to exhibit tensions between the desire to show competency and recognise professionals, with an intention to develop early career academics to achieve their full potential as teachers and researchers. Coupled with the pressure on academic jobs resulting in high competition for positions, this may affect the professional and academic provision for staff in the future.

HE is not necessarily the appropriate environment to teach reflection.

Reflection skills should not necessarily be taught on programmes for academic or professional development, these are to the most part, intended to enhance academics’ teaching and research. It has been postulated by Rendon (2000) that taking the time to wonder why we do what we do would only enhance academia. As far as embodied approaches to reflection, teaching and learning, the field appears to be dominated by cognitive theories (Kelan, 2010). Regardless, without tuition, and discourse around what it means to reflect effectively, a recognition process that relies on judgements of ‘reflective writing’ is flawed. Bourner (2003) claimed that if reflective learning is not assessed it is most likely to be neglected. Yet enforced reflective writing becomes a process of being seen to jump through required hoops to achieve a goal (Macfarlane & Gourlay, 2009). If this is how reflective tasks are approached, then it is unlikely that an individual will develop and learn through the process of reflective writing (Breen, 2000). Given the audience-aware strategic behaviours identified by Ross (2014) in

high-stakes reflective writing of this kind, then it seems unlikely that a recognition process that judges reflective writings will in any way facilitate the development of good or reflective teachers in HE, or recognise anything other than the ability to complete a form in the desired manner.

Although theoretical perspectives obviously differ, there appears to be a consensus among authors (Brookfield, 1995; Bleakly, 1999; Clegg, 1999; Dewey, 1933; Edwards & Nicoll, 2006; Smears, 2009) in a call for a more critical and reflective approach to reflective practice in general, particularly when it is to be judged for academic and professional development and competency. These authors do not argue for the abandonment of reflective practice within professional development, but ask that the academy as a whole be more critical of how it is used, be aware of the politics of reflective practice, and that it takes a theoretically informed stance on the how it has been incorporated into professional training.

Considering the example of the emphasis on reflective practice that is found within many programmes for academic and professional development, Bamber and Anderson (2012) suggest that although most programmes are underpinned by a concept of reflective practice, the inclusion of it has little to do with individualised reflection. Similarly, Kreber (2014) examined two models of reflection and found that the assumptions behind the reflective process had no effect on the output of the reflection. Not all types of reflection had impact on learning and teaching. If an academic development programme has an aim to enhance teaching practice, it is not enough to instruct a practitioner 'to reflect' without examining the preconceived ideas that lie behind how they might go about reflecting. Instead, a critical analysis of what reflection is, is necessary, to ensure that it is more than just an evaluative tool. A background in embodiment, and teaching reflective practice and self-awareness lead to

a suggestion that part of this critical analysis would be an examination of the process of what it is to reflect on something (Leigh, 2012; Leigh & Bailey, 2013). The practice of embodied approaches, and the integration of them into everyday life is a long process (Beaudoin, 1999). Similarly, reflection is a process, like critical thinking, and as such it cannot be taught in isolation. In order for reflective practice to be effective at improving practice, it may be necessary to decouple the reflective process from an evaluation of competence.

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