Leitch, R. (2025). Rehearsing – the making of reflective teachers. In M. A. Cabot, S. M. Høisæter & V. Vangsnes (Eds.), *Rehearsing for teaching: Theoretical and empirical approaches to a practice-based teacher education* (pp. 191–202). Fagbokforlaget. DOI: https://doi.org/10.55669/oa6005P3

Prologue 3

Rehearsing – the making of reflective teachers

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Reflection and reflective practice are acknowledged as being at the heart of teacher education (TE). Yet the concepts remain difficult to define, and even more difficult to communicate and teach meaningfully to preservice teachers. The question of 'how to teach reflection' effectively has underpinned the design of the ReTPro project, which brings rehearsal and reflection together in order to create a process model. The process model describes a pedagogy of reflection that aims to be meaningful to all those partners involved. It thereby not only contributes significantly to the practice of initial teacher education (ITE) but will also continue to have 'a central role in the learning life' of the effective teacher (Day, 1993, p. 83) for the longer term.

Despite its significance in stimulating substantial amounts of research and copious publications, the meaning of reflection and its application through reflective practice remain elusive. 'Reflection', viewed as a particular form of 'teacher thinking', remains broad, carrying diverse meanings not immediately accessible or applicable to preservice teachers (PSTs).

What would be helpful at this juncture is to re-examine the concept of reflection within teacher education, with the intention of making reflection more active and meaningful, and the subsequent action more reflective and practicable, thereby rendering the facilitation of reflection more tangible and easily understood by all actors within initial teacher education (ITE). This has been precisely the intention of ReTPro: to offer, try out, and evaluate a model of reflective practice based on rehearsal, loosely defined as a form of creative and embodied practice teaching sessions.

In order to fully appreciate this contribution by ReTPro, it is necessary to understand and unpack the theoretical building blocks of reflection and reflective practice. The challenge for ITE is to initiate and instil this fundamental artistry of reflective practice, but to do so requires the abstract concepts and processes to be translated and made meaningful and practicable, so that beginning teachers can see and experience how their enactment visibly enables their progress through their teaching practicum and the ongoing art of classroom teaching.

It is Schön in the mid-1980s who is the author most associated with unpacking and popularising the concept of reflection in teaching and other professions. Schön drew upon Dewey's (1933) foundational ideas on reflection, which Dewey largely viewed as 'acts of cognition' (1933, p. 12), in which reflective practice was seen as the consciously rational use of systematic thinking by teachers. He emphasised that learning depends on practical engagement in situations where the individual poses questions about why things turned out as they did, and where the individual uses evidence arising from their prior experiences to make personal judgements and solve problems about their teaching, and by such means, contributing to their ongoing development.

Schön's (1983, 1987) metaphor of the 'reflective practitioner' significantly extended this notion and caught the imagination of professionals, particularly those in education. Schön defined reflective practice as the practice through which professionals become conscious of their implicit knowledge base and thereby learn from their experience. This 'knowing in action', he considered, is the practical knowledge that professionals develop and add to over time. They achieve this through a form of cyclical and systematic inquiry, where they carefully observe, collect, and analyse evidence about their teaching practice in order to improve future teaching (Mathew & Peechatu, 2017).

Evidently, this notion of reflective practice was well received, given its recognition of teachers as professionals in charge of their own professional development, as opposed to them being perceived simply as instrumental technicians applying forms of rational problem solving based on scientific models of 'technical rationality'. Since then, there has been much discussion, debate, research, reformulations, and typologies that have elaborated, expanded, and critiqued the concepts of reflection and reflective practice. Eraut (2004), for example, faults Schön's work for its lack of precision and clarity. Nevertheless, reflective practice remains steadfastly at the heart of educational practice and career-long teacher professional development.

One of the main building blocks to the 'pedagogy of reflection' lies in Schön's (1987) use of time frames to differentiate reflection into what occurs during and after an event, such as a practicum class for a preservice teacher (PST). Schön drew a distinction between reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action as the two main forms of reflective thinking.

Reflection-in-action, he considered to be the rapid thinking, decision-making, and adjustments that go on from moment to moment during the event, such as giving an instructional activity. It is akin to 'thinking on your feet' and this type of reflection often appears very intuitive – a form of improvisation. According to Schön (1983), reflection-in-action acknowledges the tacit processes of *thinking* that accompany *doing*, and which constantly interact with and modify ongoing practice in such a way that learning takes place. Despite being based on intuition, improvisation, and 'spontaneous performance', the capacity to benefit from reflection-in-action can be slow to develop, the skills being honed over time into expert practice through the creation of an extensive repertoire of rehearsed interventions.

Reflection-on-action, by contrast, occurs retrospectively, *after an event*, such as when a practicum class has taken place, and allows the individual to evaluate actions and outcomes from the event, and to plan for future improvements. It is a form of explicit knowledge that encourages learning from experience and is commonly perceived to be easier than reflection-in-action. Russell and Munby (1992) describe it succinctly as the 'systematic and deliberate thinking back over one's actions' (p. 3). Reflection-in-action suggests that adjustments are made in the moment, whereas reflection-on-action may lead to adjustments to future learning and actions.

While it seems that in Schön's terms, these are two separate types of reflection with different purposes, the two processes together form the core professional artistry of the reflective practitioner. By reflecting *in* and *on* action, PSTs can learn from their own experiences and grow as teachers and future learners.

Since then, in the education field, related concepts of reflection have extended the core constructs of Schön's '*in*' and '*on*', arguably, to provide a more holistic and practicable model of reflective practice. Grushka et al. (2005) make a case for '*reflection for action*' or '*reflection before action*', which anticipates what might occur during a teaching event, taking into account any reflections on past experiences. This can include thinking practically through lesson planning issues, such as objectives, learning intentions, necessary resources, timings, dynamics of the classroom, individual pupil learning needs/styles, pedagogical strategies, and how the content might flow on a particular topic.

There has also been a strong argument for ensuring that PSTs move beyond the more individualistic, introspective approach to embrace *reflection about action* and reflect upon the social and cultural context of any learning milieu, and the political context of schooling in which action takes place. Boud and Walker (1998) argue that Schön's analysis ignores critical features of the context of reflection, while Smyth (1989) deplores the atheoretical and apolitical quality of his conceptions. Fook et al. (2006) argue, therefore, that the focus of critical reflection should be concerned with connecting individual identity and social context. These broader social, political, and cultural contexts permeate every aspect of learning and teaching experience, and yet are often invisible and part of the taken-for-granted, while still so necessary for beginning teachers to take account of.

There has been a plethora of research to demonstrate that reflection assists beginning teachers in identifying what is going on inside their minds, and Korthagen (2017) argues the new insights gained from reflection can lead to new and effective behaviours in the classroom. Other studies have shown that reflective practice can improve classroom interaction (Solheim et al., 2018) and positively affect teacher self-efficacy and autonomy (Noormohammadi, 2014).

Yet, despite mounting evidence, this still leaves us with questions in our endeavour to understand how to develop reflective practitioners well, *how to* make reflection, with all its ambiguities and complexities, meaningful to PSTs. The goal is to ensure that its intricacy is not reduced to a set of techniques and tools, but rather engages in a process that allows PSTs to thrive and develop their capacities for becoming independent, reflective, and effective practitioners. While most PSTs are urged to engage in reflection and reflective practice, Russell (2005) argues that no-one provides them with a 'personal model of reflective practice' (p. 200). Ward and McCotter (2004) remind us that 'Students do not automatically know what we mean by reflection; often they assume reflection is an introspective, after the fact description of teaching' (p. 225), largely engaged in through reflective journaling.

Schön's work has indeed inspired many models of reflection and categorisations of reflective practice. One of the main ways adopted to try to help initial teacher education (ITE) students come to terms with the ambiguity and complexity of reflection is to expose them to a repertoire of typologies that include distinctive levels or types of reflection. Commonly, these tend to be hierarchical in nature, with lower-level, instrumental or technical reflection being transcended by higher-level, introspective, emancipatory, or critically conscious collective processes considered useful to PSTs as a way of scaffolding learning how to reflect.

Frameworks, such as Hatton and Smith (1995), Zeichner and Liston (1996), Valli (1997), Ward and McCotter (2002), and Larrivee (2008), each provide interesting insights regarding what reflection involves, attempting to get below surface descriptions of reflection, and all are designed to help teacher educators, supervisors, and preservice teachers understand different levels and ways of achieving the goals of reflection. Some form of *critical* reflection is often seen as essential or, in some conceptualisations, is the pinnacle of becoming a critically reflective teacher. Larrivee (2000 p. 294) states that unless teachers move beyond accumulating skills and strategies, they will stay trapped in unexamined judgements, interpretations, assumptions, and expectations, while what they actually need to develop is the practice of critical reflection, which encompasses both critical inquiry and self-reflection. She is adamant 'The route to becoming an effective teacher cannot be pre-planned, it must be 'lived" (p. 306).

One typology, for instance, that has been tried and evaluated is that created by Jay and Johnson (2002) as a means for PSTs to obtain a better understanding of the processes related to reflection.

Jay and Johnson's typology of reflective thought is aimed at structuring reflective practice in an attempt to address *how to teach* reflection and bridge the theory–practice gap. Jay and Johnson's typology claims to stick closely to Schön's work and comprises three (non-linear) dimensions: *descriptive* (PST describing the matter for reflection), *comparative* (reframing the matter in light of alternative perspectives and readings), and *critical* (making a judgement, a choice among actions, and reframing into a new and better understanding of the problem). This framework guides the pedagogy of reflective practice, wherein reflective strategies are modelled by the teaching staff, followed by open, non-threatening discussions centring around the thoughts, feelings, and ideas that the students have about teaching and their roles as prospective teachers. Anselmann (2023), using this framework of reflective practice and adopting a pre- and post-test design, found that students in German nursing education significantly improved their teaching reflection abilities after participating in the training. However, not all students accomplished the critical dimension of reflection, which she puts down to a lack of opportunity to 'teach experience in practice' (pp. 6–7).

Evidently, using typologies of different types of reflection as a key modus operandi for teaching students how to 'learn to teach' is not without its criticisms or limitations. While at one level such frameworks offer a supportive scaffold to aid understanding of different ways of thinking about the process of learning to teach, at another, a typology can be perceived as too prescriptive, thereby constraining learning capacity by keeping reflection too firmly in the cognitive domain.

Authors such as Leitch and Day (2000), Day and Leitch (2001), and McManus (2011), for instance, ask 'where is emotion in critical reflection?' and argue the need for a more flexible, holistic approach to reflective practice and professional development. Gibbs's (1988) reflective cycle specifically focuses on emotional reflection, on how the emotions felt during an experience, impact a practitioner's reflections and, through debrief, determine what knowledge was gained as a result. Jay and Johnson (2002, p. 9), too, while proponents of their typology, consider that reflection involves intuition, emotion, and passion, reinforcing that reflection is not something that can be neatly packaged as a set of techniques for preservice and in-service teachers to use.

If emotion and thinking are inseparable, then developing emotional salience in beginning teachers also has to be a significant part of building a model of, or approach to, critical reflection in order to help them understand and adjust their reasons for action (Estola & Elbaz-Luwisch, 2003). Given that we bring our whole selves into teaching, then emotions, it seems, are a key part of experiential learning, and any approach to developing new teachers needs to appreciate the role the emotions, and indeed, the body, play in knowledge construction. It is vital to see the preservice teacher (PST) as emotionally embodied, and where the body is part of what constitutes the act of teaching (Klein et al., 2019, p. 699). Centralising embodiment as a key component of reflective learning in teacher education aligns with Biesta's (2010) claim that craft, wisdom, and orientation to teaching are not merely reflective capacities, but also consist of skills, qualities, and dispositions that need to be(come) embodied.

Realising that embodied pedagogies are largely absent from the theorising of teacher education, a key challenge for RetPro (teacher education) has been how to truly re-conceptualise teacher education, honour the role of emotions within embodiment in reflection, and build a model that is dynamic and holistic in order to make wholly reflective teachers.

Rehearsal is viewed as the vehicle through which to build an inclusive, dynamic model of reflective learning that would also engage emotions and bodies for educational purposes, not just for the PSTs, but also for all actors involved in what Schön (1987, p. 170) termed 'the reflective practicum'. The reflective practicum Schön described as a 'virtual world', finds ways to replicate the essential features of a practice to be learned. It 'encourages students to experiment at low risk (…) and go back to do things over when it seems useful to do so' (p. 170) under the coaching of expert practitioners.

The RetPro concept of the 'rehearsal room' (Vangsnes, 2021–2026) has been designed as a conceptual space that extends these foundational Schönian ideas, through which the focus of teacher education shifts from predominantly theoretical reflections about teaching to building professional teaching repertoires of embodied, reflective, and purposeful actions by means of 'rehearsal', with the aim of closing the perceived gap between theory and practice.

Rehearsals come in various forms and opportunities, under the coaching, supervision, and modelling by expert practitioners (teacher educators, supervisors, and practicum teachers) who engage in a community of practice with PSTs to 'try-out' new and critically important ways of practising and performing in order to develop professional artistry and wisdom in preparation for school practicum and beyond.

Outside of music performance studies, it is a rarity to see 'rehearsal' linked to the development of reflective practice.

And yet, rehearsal, as a purposeful and embodied means of building teaching repertoires and of linking theory to practice, is becoming more visible as a core technique within ITE, whatever the terminology or technique – micro-teaching, simulations, role-play, try-outs, and so on.

Rehearsals in their various formulations act as problem-solving spaces in which PSTs can observe and practise safely how to co-ordinate the complexities of classroom teaching, how to deal with the dynamics of student interaction alongside pedagogical strategy and purposeful content in advance of real-life enactments with children.

Coached rehearsals 'approximate' real life, providing opportunities for PSTs to engage in 'deliberate practice' (Ericsson, 2002) through experiences, such as simulations and rehearsals that are proximal to classroom teaching and where students can safely experiment.

Such rehearsed, embodied pedagogical strategies and experiences engage PSTs in different kinds and ways of learning about teaching under reflective supervision or what Schön (1988, p. 19) termed 'the coaching of expert practitioners' to help PSTs develop their knowing-in-action and thus become more 'educationally wise' Biesta (2012, p. 8) by learning to be more freely reflective-in-action.

Schön (1988) decreed 'Follow me!'. Indeed, it is worth expanding the notion of rehearsal to include the element of explicit modelling (after Jay and Johnson (2002) above), where the academic tutor steps out within the teacher education session and tries out or experiments with an instructional episode (e.g. introducing creative pedagogical strategies, such as process drama).

This is not a 'do as I do' directive, but more in the spirit of the tutor being in the self-conscious position to receive feedback from students, and explicitly to reflect in front of the students by 'thinking aloud' about his/her design and enactment of the session.

Schön (1989) argued that such reflective supervision would help teachers become more reflective-in-action by learning important things from 'the virtuosity of others' (p. 19).

Finally, as we move forward in the quest to make teacher preparation more embodied, and reflection more practically meaningful, it is possible to envisage a teacher education pedagogy combining the differing reflective processes (*-for, -in, -on*, and *-about*) at each stage within a model that foregrounds rehearsal and modelling.

One such developmental framework is that offered by McDonald et al. (2013). This model of rehearsal illustrates four stages or processes: 1. Studying and Modelling; 2. Repetitive Try-outs; 3. Enactment in Classrooms; 4. Critical Analysis and Reflection. Table P3.1 on the next page unpacks the differing forms of reflective processes that predominate at the different stages, although all forms of reflection can be articulated, planned for, and realised throughout the iterative process.

Adopting or adapting such a model of rehearsal may make meaningful a complex and layered pedagogy for teacher education, and make explicit the link or 'transfer of learning' between formal academic-based sessions and school-based practicum that is so vital to the making of truly reflective teachers.

Table P3.1

Summarising a cyclical teacher preparation model of rehearsal, combining differing reflective processes (-for, -in, -on, and -about). Based on McDonald et al.'s (2013) model of rehearsal

Rehearsal processes	Key activities	Predominant forms of reflection
Studying and modelling	Planning instructional and pedagogical activities. Viewing expert modelling of practice, e.g. live simulation of an episode of teaching undertaken by teacher educator or teacher mentor.	Reflection **for** practice Reflection **on** practice
Repetitive try-outs	Individual and group coached rehearsals using different strategies (practical/embodied) under tutelage by a more expert guide Observing peer try-outs	Reflection **in** action Reflection **on** action Self-reflection, giving and receiving feedback
Enactment in classrooms	In practicum, undertaking *in vivo* classroom lessons with PSTs under teacher mentor supervision and in light of rehearsals	Reflection **in** action Focusing on feelings, actions and adjustments in 'the real situations' before 'other' feedback
Critical analysis and reflection combining different forms of reflective processes	A holistic review of the situated activity and what was experienced and learned before the cycle begins again	Critical reflection **on** action Critical reflection **about** action Looking critically over the what, why, and when of activities and experiences in context, using all forms of reflection

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