CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION: WHO IS THIS BOOK FOR, WHAT IS IT FOR AND HOW DO I USE IT?

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By the end of this chapter you should be able to:

- understand the aims of the book and recognise the connection between these and some of your aims for your initial teacher education;
- identify some key issues for the secondary teacher and for secondary education today;
- begin to reflect on what perspectives you already bring to these professional issues and how you are going to prepare for meeting the challenges that these issues will present in the future.

The aim of this book is to help you through your initial teacher education (ITE) journey. It might help you to see your journey into teaching and your role as a teacher in a new light. Through the process of critical reflection on a range of issues related to becoming a teacher in secondary schools, you will encounter examples of how research

and practice go hand in hand in teaching. The intention is that you perceive that being engaged in a process of enquiry is an essential part of becoming a professional in education and that the direction of travel that you follow in becoming a teacher will be important in terms of staying on track for your ongoing professional development.

The issues explored in this book are current but they all lead us back to some of the most central and enduring questions in education. Who has the answers in terms of what makes for good education? What kind of curriculum do we want for pupils? What is the role of the teacher? What is the nature of learning? What is the social function of schooling and how do we address the moral dimension at the heart of education? What is the purpose of research in education and how do we ensure it informs our practice? These are fundamental questions with which every generation of teachers needs to engage. The chapter headings are questions but we don't claim have all the answers. While we might present some orthodox answers, we also challenge these and ask you to reflect on different perspectives and come to your own conclusions.

The next two sections of this chapter give you an overview of how the whole book is organised and then how the individual chapters are organised.
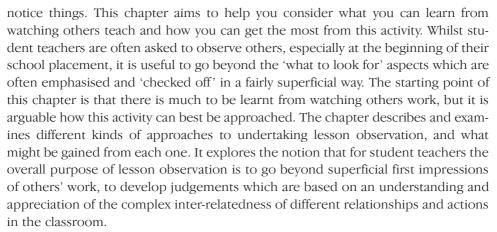
How is the book organised?

The book is organised as a journey, or perhaps more accurately, two journeys. It is organised as a journey through time in relation to the processes of becoming a teacher. It is also organised as a journey through the different stages of thinking about teaching and learning that you might be asked to use during this process.

You are beginning a journey of developing the knowledge, skills and dispositions appropriate to being a successful teacher. Chapter 2 begins that journey by asking what the nature of those skills, dispositions and knowledge is, where you might find them and how you will go about developing them. This chapter explores the nature of professional learning and briefly surveys the recent history of official initiatives to provide teachers with professional knowledge. It then argues for a model of professional learning that is based on personal practical knowledge. This is knowledge that is gained by individual teachers through active enquiry into their own contexts. However, it is important that this enquiry is also informed by perspectives gained from the enquiry of others. The chapter concludes that teachers cannot expect to acquire professional learning through the unreconstructed transfer of other people's ideas. Nor can they learn effectively through personal inquiry that is not informed by the ideas of others. Effective professional learning requires dialectic between the two.

Observing will be an early part of your experience of learning to be a teacher and in Chapter 3, Helen Scott looks at how student teachers develop their ability to

notice things. This chapter aims to help you consider what you can learn from watching others teach and how you can get the most from this activity. Whilst student teachers are often asked to observe others, especially at the beginning of their school placement, it is useful to go beyond the 'what to look for' aspects which are often emphasised and 'checked off' in a fairly superficial way. The starting point of this chapter is that there is much to be learnt from watching others work, but it is arguable how this activity can best be approached. The chapter describes and examines different kinds of approaches to undertaking lesson observation, and what might be gained from each one. It explores the notion that for student teachers the overall purpose of lesson observation is to go beyond superficial first impressions of others' work, to develop judgements which are based on an understanding and appreciation of the complex inter-relatedness of different relationships and actions in the classroom.

Closely connected to observing is the process of critically reflecting on what you have observed in order to decide what your observations mean. Beginning teachers are often asked to reflect critically on their school experience and in Chapter 4 Jon Tibke and Lindsay Poyner take a closer look at what is meant by this. This chapter aims to enable you to start to appreciate the benefit of learning to reflect in a purposeful and effective manner. Reflection does not simply happen through participating in teaching practice and writing assignments. Critical reflection, linked to sustained development during your initial practice and beyond, requires you to think more deeply about your actions and interactions with others and to consider what and how you learn from these experiences. As you develop your practice, the focus of your reflection will consider how your teaching impacts on the learning of pupils in your classes. This chapter will explore the reasons why it is important for you to reflect on your experiences during your first steps in teaching. It will *analyse* selected areas of research and *identify* some of the challenges that beginning teachers face in developing the skills of reflection. The authors offer *practical ideas* for you as a student teacher about how to manage the process of critical reflection and support you in *understanding* how reflective practice enhances the multi-faceted role of a teacher. They also draw on an individual trainee teachers' experiences and identify some potential starting points to show the *reflective process*.

As Scott and Tibke and Poyner argue, observation and reflection are not straight forward. We don't just passively register what there is to see. Noticing and interpreting through reflection are active and are influenced by who we are and the beliefs and knowledge that we bring to the situation. In Chapter 5 on professional identity, Martyn Lawson and Martin Watts explore questions related to the role of the secondary school teacher and how student teachers develop their identity as teachers. They draw on research in this field of enquiry. You will be encouraged to reflect critically on your own sense of identity within your subject and within the

school. Lawson and Watts go on to explore the potential impact that the increasing integration of technology into classroom practice might have on your identity in the future. The chapter concludes with the view that your identity will continue to change and develop with new learning technologies and approaches to learning in schools.

As mentioned in the last paragraph, a particularly salient aspect of identity for you as a secondary school teacher might be your identity as a subject specialist. In Chapter 6 Kathryn Fox and Patrick Smith look at the importance of developing a philosophy for your subject. Your subject philosophy and the context of your practice continually evolve, and yet may be challenged by other professionals as you progress through your teaching career. Your subject philosophy will impact upon the opportunities that you offer your pupils. This chapter explores recent and relevant research that investigates these areas of study and gives practical examples through a number of curriculum areas. A key theme is the difficulty that you as a developing teacher may experience as you try to put your philosophy into practice. The chapter encourages you to meet those challenges.
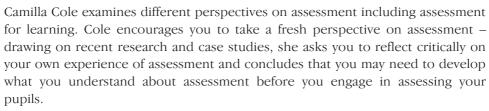
Dividing the curriculum, and as a consequence teachers, into subjects is only one way of thinking about how schools need to be organised. In Chapter 7, Carrie Mercier looks briefly at different definitions of the curriculum and draws out some key issues that emerge from the story of how the curriculum has developed in secondary schools. She also explores two contrasting models of the curriculum and examines some of the theory behind them. The chapter includes the voices of teachers caught up in the process of curriculum change and raises questions about their different perspectives on the curriculum. In the course of the chapter, it should become clear to you that you need to reflect on your own role in the development of the curriculum and gain an understanding of the various curriculum models that are at work in your placement schools in order to be able to contribute to the curriculum development in your school in the future.

In Chapter 7, Mercier argues that thinking about the curriculum cannot be separated from thinking about teaching and learning methods. In Chapter 8, Tony Ewens examines theories of learning, especially those drawn from philosophy and psychology. This chapter aims to give you an overview of the key theories about the nature and processes of learning which you will find relevant to your classroom practice. The chapter will also examine the complex relationship between learning theory and subject teaching. The nature of knowledge, in any subject, is also complex, so you need a sophisticated approach when using theories of learning to enhance different elements of your teaching, for example planning and evaluating your work and considering how pupils develop mastery in your subject

How we conceptualise learning and the nature of learning that pupils engage in is closely connected to how we think about and use assessment. In Chapter 9,
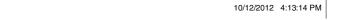
Camilla Cole examines different perspectives on assessment including assessment for learning. Cole encourages you to take a fresh perspective on assessment – drawing on recent research and case studies, she asks you to reflect critically on your own experience of assessment and concludes that you may need to develop what you understand about assessment before you engage in assessing your pupils.

Chapters 8 and 9 focus on the qualities of pupils as learners and the nature of teaching, learning and assessment interactions with them. However, it is important not to overlook that not all pupils are the same. Responding to diversity has been a major challenge for trainee teachers. Research indicates that newly qualified teachers often feel that they are least prepared for this dimension of their role as teacher. In Chapter 10, Joy Schmack aims to challenge tokenistic approaches to diversity and identifies ways of embedding good practice in your teaching.

Considering diversity leads us to thinking about social, moral, spiritual and cultural education and the ways that this relates to positive outcomes for diverse communities. This is the focus of Chapter 11 by Carolyn Reade and Carrie Mercier. In this chapter, Reade and Mercier examine the way in which provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils came to be a requirement for all schools. They look at how this agenda might be understood by teachers today and ask how it might translate into classroom practice. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils has a significant place on the Ofsted agenda for the inspection of schools and this dimension of the curriculum is often seen as closely linked to the requirement that schools contribute to community cohesion. Reade and Mercier explore the idea that all teachers have a responsibility to ensure that there is a sense of shared values and common goals and that every pupil has a sense of belonging. They conclude by suggesting that this connects to the bigger picture and looks beyond the school gates to the contribution of the school to the development of wider society.

Chapter 12 explores an important staging post in your development as a teacher: the point at which you are preparing to move from the ITE phase of your development to the NQT year. In Chapter 12 on initial teacher education and induction processes in schools, Gail Fuller draws on a wealth of experience in working with beginner teachers in the school context. This chapter draws directly on concrete examples of reflecting on the induction experience, examining good practice and raising issues for the changing context in ITE. This chapter presents an opportunity for you to draw out key points to reflect on in anticipating your first few months in your first job, focusing attention on the relational and emotional aspects of teaching. It concludes that the newly qualified teacher will need to take on board the whole process of 'becoming' a teacher and all it entails which is more than just ticking the Teachers' Standards.

Chapter 13 on the value of Master's-level study might have relevance for you in this early post-qualifying period. Equally it might have relevance for you during your ITE course if Master's-level study is a feature of your course. In recent years, Master's-level study for teachers and student teachers was promoted and funded by the government for a number of reasons. It was promoted as a means of encouraging a particular kind of approach to the linking of theory and practice in initial teacher education, as a vehicle for experienced teachers' professional development, to enable individuals to improve their classroom practice and as a way of teachers implementing government education policies. Based on the experience of other European countries (for example, Finland), the view that creating a 'Master's-level profession' would raise the status of teachers in society and therefore attract higher qualified applicants was promoted, as well as the notion that this in turn would lead to improved educational outcomes for pupils. Most primary and secondary PCGE courses offer (or require) Master's-level modules to be taken by student teachers. This chapter examines definitions of Master's level and considers the particular benefits and challenges for student teachers.

In the final chapter, Chapter 14, themes and ideas that have recurred throughout the book will be drawn together. This chapter will also draw together the important lessons that recur throughout the book in relation to the importance of research and enquiry for classroom practice and for your career-long professional development.

How is each chapter organised?

Each chapter maintains a balance between specific details and examples from practice and wider critical perspectives informed by research. One of the main purposes of this book is to demonstrate the ways in which active engagement in, and with, research can challenge or alter our initial beliefs or assumptions about education. It may even cause us to question the understandings we have arrived at through practical experience. Although the chapters do not have a strictly identical structure you will find that all chapters contain 'case studies'. These are specific real examples that are intended to anchor or illuminate the more general points that they are making. Chapters will also have a number of 'points for reflection' that are intended as a stimulus either to further long-term exploration of the topic being discussed or as a mental preparation for the points that are going to be explored next in the chapter. Each chapter also ends with questions for review that invite you to reflect on what you may have learnt from the chapter as a whole. Finally, each chapter, in addition to a list of references that you can follow up, has recommended further reading.