**Stephen D. Brookfield (2017) *Becoming a Critically Reflective Teacher* (Second Edition), San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass (ISBN 978-11-1904970-8 [Hbk], 304pp)**
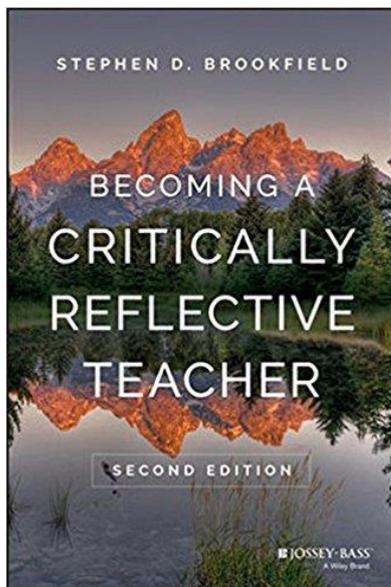
The informal tone that Brookfield adopts grabbed my attention at the outset. Written in the first person meant that, at times, it was almost as if Brookfield was in the room having a conversation with me; encouraging me to reflect on my teaching style. Further, his perspective that "every good teacher wants to change the world for the better" chimes with my own deeply held values and beliefs. *Becoming a Critically Reflective Teacher* is now in its second edition. The first edition was published over 20 years ago (Brookfield, 1995) and, at the time of writing, boasts 5696 citations according to Google Scholar.

In short, it is a seminal book. In doing this review, I wanted to offer some comparisons of the two editions and to reflect on how teaching has developed in the intervening years.

In the latest edition, Brookfield posits what it means to be a critically reflective teacher; "Critically reflective teaching happens when we build into our practice the habit of constantly trying to identify, and check, the assumptions that inform our actions as teachers." He then explains the different types of assumptions and how, in many ways, 'we are' our assumptions. He breaks this down, explaining that there are three main types: paradigmatic – structuring assumptions we use to order the world into fundamental categories; prescriptive – assumptions that we think ought to happen in a particular situation; and casual – assumptions about how different parts of the world work (pp.: 4-5). From this, there is then an outline on how we can examine our teaching assumptions using four lenses: students' eyes, colleagues' perceptions, personal experiences, and theory. I found this particularly interesting in investigating how my own assumptions came to being when viewed through these suggested lenses. I noted immediate areas that merited improvement. Interestingly, in this regard, the original edition explained critical reflection in more detail by giving the reader an understanding of the general reflective process; the latest edition assumes that the

reader already has an understanding of the reflective process and gives a more detailed account of critical reflection.

Brookfield then focuses on assumptions and alternative interpretations. This is a useful part of the book in that it encourages thought about practice we take for granted. For instance, and one assumption that resonated with me, relates to splitting students into groups and then, perhaps as a demonstration of our commitment as teachers, to visit the groups. An alternative interpretation posits that students might feel uncomfortable with this or obliged to perform when the teacher approaches the group. These insights into power dynamics in the classroom are revelatory but, frustratingly, Brookfield does not offer a solution! Overall, many of the assumptions about teaching and learning do not appear to have changed when comparing the two editions of the book.

Chapters Four and Five provide an in-depth review of the four lenses of critical reflection: the students' eyes, colleagues' perceptions, personal experience, and theory. The original edition focused on student perceptions and on how learning to know oneself - appreciate 'autobiography'- can improve teaching. Brookfield argues, in the latest edition, that reflection can become emblematic, especially when forced to reflect against a framework. Chapters Six and Seven examine the techniques of viewing ourselves through students' eyes. We can also benefit from our colleagues' perceptions in terms of feedback and utilising this to improve our teaching practice. Chapter Seven provides exercises to encourage critically reflective conversations between peers. I found these

useful and have since used these; the 'Critical Conversation Protocol' accomplishes the core purpose of critical reflection to uncover and to consider multiple perspectives (p. 128). Chapter Eight focuses on 'team teaching for critical reflection'. I believe the main benefit of team teaching is the peer observation element, which is a significant tool for personal development. I have found peer observation an important way of improving my teaching skills: being observed and observing experienced staff has provided insights into my own teaching strengths and weaknesses and allowed space for improvement in a non-judgemental environment.

In my opinion, in ringing the changes for the new edition, not all represent an improvement. For instance, I preferred Chapter Three in the original edition ('Learning to know ourselves') to Chapter Nine in the latest edition ('Using personal experience') as I found the original provided a more plausible and compelling rationale and argument in relation to sharing and opening up one's personal values with students; this is important when developing trust with learners. With the publication of the original edition, the technological context of teaching and learning was entirely different. Therefore, Chapter Eleven provides new content around how social media can be incorporated into critical reflection whilst Chapter Twelve is an illumination of Brookfield's perspective on race. In relation to the former chapter, Brookfield reflects on the importance of social media in harnessing information and feedback whilst his perspective on race and racism, in which he counsels teachers to reflect sensitively about equality, race and

racism, embellishes previous ideas (Brookfield, 2007).

Overall, it has been illuminating comparing the two editions and, as underlined in this review, not all the changes in the current edition work. Nevertheless, both editions are engaging and succeed in challenging the reader to question their thinking and practice on teaching.

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