Chapter 2
Reflective Inquiry: Foundational Issues – “A Deepening of Conscious Life”

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Introduction

In retrospect, certain movements in human history seem momentous, as when silent movies gave way to talkies, when critical information searches came about at the click of a computer key, or when the double helix revealed the patterns of cells in complex arrays. Most people claim to see whole new worlds open before their eyes and marvel at how this was achieved and how it came about. But recently, some revelations point away from complex sources to more common everyday ones, even to familiar social practices.

Take for example, as book reviewer and dramatist Peter Holbrook (2008) has described, a work on the invention of suspicion by author Lorna Hutson. In her book of the same title, Hutson (2007) examines the revolution in drama in England during the sixteenth century. Many scholars had noticed the intense flowering of realism of literature and drama of Renaissance England. Hutson claims it is partially due to the developments in legal theory and practice. She believes the enormous capacity of drama to hold the mirror up to nature is rooted in the transformation of the legal culture of early modern England.

For example, the later part of the sixteenth century saw “a growth in popular litigiousness and general law-mindedness as well as popular participation in judicial proceedings, both secular and ecclesiastical, and interest in investigative and evidentiary processes”. Hutson lays special emphasis on the jury (Holbrook 2008, p. 8). She brings out a fascinating resemblance between the role of a juror and the viewpoint of a spectator in a play- house. Both the juror and the spectator are concerned about making of judgments on the “narrative probability and the circumstantial coherence of the alleged facts. the act of spectatorship is an act of diagnosis” (Holbrook 2008, p. 8). As a result local sleuths “as well as those serving on a jury will commonly find themselves mulling over intentions, motivations, occasions, histories” (Holbrook 2008, p. 8).

But another strand of Hutson’s argument about this consequential development points to the revival of classical oratory, especially in school curriculum. Hutson identifies the forensic character of most of Greek and Roman oratory, and notes how Cicero’s speeches often involve the construction of a believable narrative. In one of his defenses, Cicero acknowledges how he hopes “he has evoked certain events so vividly his listeners will think they have seen them with their own eyes” (Holbrook 2008, p. 8). Hutson believes it
is as natural for lawyers as it is for orators to be committed to narrative, especially realistic, investigative narrative. And surprisingly, in sixteenth century England, Hutson believes they learnt it all at school!

Hutson’s work suggests that the flowering of inquiry as a way of legal thinking was part of the curriculum of the English school. We ask: In our time, could inquiry thinking similarly be learnt at school? Reports to date reveal serious challenges to teaching inquiry at all educational levels (Kuhn 2005; Kuhn, Weinstock 2002, see also Bok 2006). Surely needed is a pedagogy by which inquiry thinking might be nurtured. Here, four elements or principles of a pedagogy are suggested to facilitate that thinking: (1) Understanding the importance of knowing how one knows, of taking a meta-cognitive view of oneself as a knower; (2) Conducting inquires into one’s own teaching, practice and learning – of how to teach and how students learn; (3) Exploring the meaning of taking an inquiry stance; and, (4) adopting the attitudes Dewey suggests for becoming a reflective inquirer. Why these four? In this chapter, I take up this question by identifying relevant theories and some exemplary pedagogical strategies for each of the principles to provide evidence that the four contribute to a necessary deepening and widening of conscious life of learners.

The Self as a Knower: Developing a Perspective ‘Towards’ Knowing

Recently, interest in personal epistemology has raised curiosity about peoples’ ideas of knowledge and of knowing how people come to know. While several researchers have sketched their ideas of how this phenomenon develops and how empirical research and theory have grown dramatically in the recent decades, there is still difficulty in unlocking what epistemological thinking is and why it matters. As Deanna Kuhn and Michael Weinstock (2002) observe in Hofer and Pintrich’s (2002) comprehensive review of epistemological research, there are serious difficulties in making research on the subject useful to other researchers and practitioners. In part, there is the conceptual complexity of the subject itself. Then, there is not an agreed upon language for describing the phenomenon. What is needed is clarity in language and in indicating what difference epistemological development makes. Yet, at the same time, there is a remarkable similarity in the overall conceptual frameworks of epistemological development as defined by researchers (Hofer 2002, p. 4–7). My purpose here is to look at just two frameworks of epistemological development and to sketch the implications for inquiry learning through each of the schemes: the pioneering work of William Perry (1970), still acknowledged as fundamental to the paradigm; and the contribution of Mary Belenky and her colleagues – Blythe Clinchy, Nancy Goldberger and Jill Tarule – who began with Perry’s discoveries and went on to develop the model referred to as “Ways of Knowing” (Belenky et al. 1986), a model many see as adding considerably to Perry’s vision.

But why connect ways of knowing with reflective inquiry? Reflective inquiry invites a consideration of how we know, how we learn and asks us to be attentive to our own awareness, to become conscious of ourselves as knowers. Thus, our vision of knowing and our own ideas of knowledge are intimately connected to engaging consciously in inquiry, to making investigations into some puzzle or problem we want to understand. Bill Perry, counselor and researcher of psychological development, first mapped how students constructed understandings about knowledge and knowing, how they differed in that process, and suggested what difference those dissimilarities could make in their learning.

Bill Perry’s own investigations were in parts, serendipitous. In the 1970s, Perry, the Director of Harvard University’s Bureau of Study Counsel, was also teaching courses in “how to improve one’s reading abilities” to Harvard undergraduates. After having completed one course, Perry asked students to write an evaluation of it and was astonished to
read his students’ responses. Some said, “This course has changed my whole outlook on education and life! It was superbly taught! Should be required of all students!” But others claimed, “This course is falsely advertised and dishonest. You have cheated me of my tuition!” (Perry 1981, p. 77). Perry, trying to make sense of these dis-similarities, decided to try to understand how students were making sense of their studies across their 4 years of college.

**Perry’s Discovery: Students construct and re-construct their ideas about knowledge**

Perry’s method was elegant. He simply invited students to participate in an annual interview at the end of each of their four years of college. He asked them, “Would you like to say what has stood out for you during this year?” Perry thought that most students’ responses would relate to personality measures, revealing some aspect of their personality. But when he analyzed the students’ responses, Perry came to the conclusion that over the 4 years of college, students had undergone a revolutionary change, experiencing what a colleague called an epistemological pilgrim’s progress – important changes in the ways they viewed and understood knowledge, truth, authority, etc. Perry sketched this model as a “scheme” of the ability of students to construct meaning. Over their college years, Perry realized, students had been engaged in nothing less than creating coherent interpretive frameworks, reinterpreting their ways of knowing, of making meaning and of making commitments (Perry 1981, p. 77). All of this held great educational importance for understanding teaching and student learning. One researcher reports: “Even after some 30 years of extensive and varied scholarship, Perry’s scheme continues to reflect the most critical dimension to educators’ understanding of learning and students’ approaches to learning ... it remains a rich heuristic framework” (Moore 2002, p. 18).

Perry, in developing his scheme, described 9 positions (stances or perspectives), identified four major stages, the changes in meaning that students experienced as development over time: Dualism, followed by multiplicity, contextual relativism and commitment. Perry discovered some students early on, even as freshmen, begin their educational careers with a naive, dualistic perspective on knowledge and knowing, that is, they assumed all knowledge is known and that someone, usually an authority figure, knows the one right answer to any problem. As students develop, they come to realize that there are or can be multiple perspectives towards what is known. The danger of this perspective, which Perry called “multiplicity,” is that any opinion may be termed as good as any other and all knowledge or truth relegated to “just an opinion.” But growth is possible and some students realized that some positions have a better grounding in evidence.

Then comes the revolutionary leap to understanding that all knowledge is constructed and relative (to something else, values, beliefs, etc.). Perry named this “contextual relativism.” This movement, arguably the most significant transition within Perry’s scheme, “represents a fundamental transformation of one’s perspective – from a vision of the world as essentially dualistic and fixed, to a vision of a world essentially relativistic and context-bound, with a few right/wrong exceptions. Contextual relativism is the self-consciousness of being an active maker of meaning” (Moore 2002, p. 21).

Perry’s description of this change identifies it as the “radical reperception of all knowledge as contextual and relativistic” (Perry 1999, p. 121). Students achieve this by making a transition. That is, they take relativism from that of a special case to the status of context and within this they relegate dualism to a subordinate place. But Perry remarks, “Strangely enough, we have found no explicit description of this kind of transformation as a phenomenon in human personal development.... The event presented us with a paradox:
the revolution is both the most violent accommodation of structure in the entire development, and at the same time the most quiet. It involves a complete transposition between part and whole, figure and ground, and yet no student in our sample referred to it as a conscious event, a discrete experience, a ‘realisation’” (Perry 1999, pp. 123–124). Once students had achieved this position of contextual relativism, they could not believe or acknowledge that they had ever held a dualistic one.

Perry, similar to Piaget, believes that change comes about for students through their encounters with different points of view on issues presented by fellow students or their professors. Informal discussions, conversations, challenging arguments, all serve to foster the process. Students themselves are the constructors of knowledge of these stances. Perry termed these interpretive stances he called “positions” as perspectives towards knowing (Perry 1971, 1999). Perry sketched this scheme, Fig. 2.1, indicating that students could be in different positions while in the same class.

Lee Knefelkamp, a colleague of Perry who extended Perry’s model to indicate its implications for student learning, suggests it is clear from this diagram that the first four positions or stages of the scheme are elaborations of dualism and that contextual relativism is a qualitative, different way of thinking; The later stages, 6–9, are the anticipations, decisions and experiences of the consequences of life commitments usually made in adult-hood. Thus, it is primarily positions 2–5, that are significant in terms of student learning (Knefelkamp 1999, p. ).

Overall, William Moore argues, there are two significant dynamics in Perry’s scheme: (1) confronting and coping with diversity and uncertainty; and, (2) “the attendant evolution of meaning-making about learning and self.... as learners confront levels of multiplicity, their meaning making shifts and evolves in predictable ways. Most significantly, knowledge is seen as increasingly conjectural and uncertain, open to (and requiring) interpretation.” This development triggers parallel shifts in a learner’s views about the role of a teacher as well as the role of a student (Moore 2002, p. 22).

Perry’s sketch of epistemological development, along with Knefelkamp’s elaboration, helped to bring these ideas to the attention of college teachers as well as researchers who found them extraordinarily useful in explaining their students. As Perry hoped the rich data he collected of students’ thinking and the change across their 4 years of college, made the challenges students and their teachers faced understandable. Perry, who built into his model, the idea that people faced with the challenges of revising their ideas and models of the world about knowledge and who or what could be trusted, might become stymied by such changes and want to retreat from them or hold off accepting a new perspective. To Perry, these could be sensible moves in their development. This research clearly engendered new discussions of early adult development.

It also generated new research questions. One, that was of particular interest to Mary Belenky, Blythe Clinchy, Nancy Goldberger and Jill Tarule, was how appropriate the model was for women, since most of Perry’s students in his studies were white, privileged Harvard men. Blythe Clinchy while conducting some earlier research on college students’ ways of knowing, noticed that some women seemed not to respond in ways Perry’s men

![Fig. 2.1 Perry’s scheme: 9 positions](image-url)
did. For example, Perry had noted that students often would eagerly engage in argument when discovering that an opinion differed from theirs, trying to punch holes in it. But some women encountering a similar situation would seem to take the position of trying hard to understand others’ position. Thus Belenky and Clinchy, joined by Goldberger and Tarule, decided to launch a study of their own of women’s epistemologies, of their ways of knowing. They recruited 135 women from different learning environments, from liberal arts colleges, to community colleges, to those in social service agencies. Their work led to the creation of a new model of epistemological development, the ways of knowing.

The model developed by Belenky et al. posited, similarly to Perry’s, that all knowledge is constructed by individuals themselves. But Belenky et al. had a different epistemological issue as their concern. They wanted to know how women came to understand themselves as students and knowers – not only how they viewed truth and knowledge, but rather how they saw themselves as knowers. Did they rely on others to hand them knowledge, did they rely on their own “gut” feelings, or did they see themselves as users of procedures that could deliberately help to validate knowledge?

This concern to understand how these students made sense of their experience especially focused on the procedures of knowing. Belenky and her colleagues identified two major strands of procedures: one of trying hard to understand another’s view, which the researchers called “Connected Knowing”; in contrast to another view they termed “Separate Knowing” in which the individual self was to be kept in an objective stance, distanced from the position, an evaluator of it. The full scheme of the Ways of Knowing is indicated (from Clinchy 2003, p. 37).

**Ways of Knowing**

- **Received knowing:** The source of knowledge is external, residing especially in authorities who know the truth. Truth can be embodied in words. Truth is single, absolute, concrete, and factual, so a thing is either right or wrong, true or false, good or bad.
- **Subjective knowing:** The source of knowledge is located in the self. Listening to one’s inner voice becomes knowledge, seen as being based on one’s personal experience and intuition. There are multiple truths and multiple realities, and all are equally valid, but mine is absolutely right for me. Truth is personal and private and probably incommunicable.
- **Procedural knowing:** Knowledge is acquired, developed, and communicated through the deliberate and systematic use of procedures.
- **Separate mode:** Focus is on analyzing and evaluating different points of view or arguments. Be abstract and analytic. Objectivity is achieved through detachment by adhering to impersonal standards and “weeding out the self.” Feelings are seen as a clouding thought. Goal: To construct truth – to test, prove, disprove, convince, and be convinced.
- **Connected mode:** Focus is on trying to understand and experience another’s perspective, another’s and reality, and to be understood. Be narrative and holistic rather than argumentative and analytic. Objectivity is achieved through attachment, adopting another’s perspective. Feelings are seen as an illuminating thought. Goal: To construct meaning – to understand and be understood.
- **Constructed knowing:** Knowledge is understood to be constructed, and the knower is assumed to play a role in shaping the known. Use of both separate and connected modes of discourse can become integrated into a single approach. Openness to transformation. Goal: To understand the contexts, out of which ideas arise, and to take responsibility for examining, evaluating, and developing systems of thought, and to attend to their implications for action. To care about thinking and think about caring (Clinchy 2003, p. 37).
Belenky and her colleagues provide rich examples in their work of actual statements of students talking about their beliefs about these things. But one professor of communications found that the descriptions of the ways of knowing that he heard Blythe Clinchy describe in a lecture and later read about in the book *Women’s Ways of Knowing* offered a helpful conceptual scheme to him. He wondered if it might help his students as well. It seemed to fit his students’ descriptions of their ways of communicating. He had found that most of his students—largely unnoticed by them—communicated in definite patterns. Some “communicated as if they really know something only if they got it from an expert source or authority (‘received knowing’); others, only if it originated in or agreed with their own personal opinions and/or experiences (‘subjective knowing’). A third group of students seemed to learn best by trying to understand and empathise with others (‘connected procedural knowing’); a fourth group, by debating and arguing (‘separated procedural knowing’)” (Quoted in Angelo and Cross 1993, p. 83).

The Professor then wanted to see if the scheme made sense to his students. He devised an assessment on the ways of knowing, giving the students descriptions of “Separate”, “Connected,” “Subjective,” and “Received” ways of knowing (as described above). He then asked students to rate (1) which statement reminded them most of themselves; (2) which of the approaches they actually use when communicating in class; (3) which they used most in their social/personal life outside of class; and, (4) which they preferred when others are communicating with them. Finally, he asked if there were some interpersonal situations in which one approach might not be appropriate. The Professor and his students studied the results. It opened several days of provocative and productive conversation, it even prompted some investigations by students themselves. As a class, the Professor and his students found themselves consciously referring to the ways of knowing scheme throughout the year in what they described as important and helpful ways of understanding themselves as communicators with others, as knowers.

Other third level teachers as well as teachers of high school and middle school have found the idea of Perry-Belenky ways of knowing models provocative and useful tools of interpretation (Lyons 1990). They too consider how the frameworks can serve as teaching tools. Giving students the challenge to consider different perspectives on knowing is seen as a tool for inquiry.

The ways of knowing models offer important interpretive frameworks and valued perspectives for teachers and students. Donald Schon suggests an important implication: that is, not only do individuals hold epistemological perspectives, but so do institutions. “Like other organisations, educational institutions have epistemologies. They hold conceptions of what counts as knowledge and how you know what you claim to know. These theories of knowledge need not be consciously espoused by individuals although they may be, for they are built into institutional structures and practices” (Schon 1995, p. 32). For instance, K-12 schools today that endorse a constructivist view of learning, of students, as constructors of their own knowing, will endorse practices in keeping with that view. Schools that do not, will promote different practices. Introducing students to the challenges of different perspectives on knowing is a useful tool for facilitating inquiry, and a valued achievement when students can grapple with them.

**Engaging in Inquiry: Exploring One’s Own Practice**

**One Case Study**

It is easily apparent that no one has better access to study educational settings and students than teachers themselves. Yet that rarely happens. What if teachers or any practitioner were to study regularly and seriously their own and their students’ contexts of learning?
What would they uncover? How? How valuable would that knowledge be? What would faculty need to carry out this kind of inquiry? To date, much important research has already begun on this task, especially through self-study (Loughran et al. 2004), but much remains to be done (Kuhn 2005).

And inquiry by itself is a challenging undertaking for teachers and their students, often the subject of serious misconceptions (Kuhn 2005). It is a process that needs to be scaffolded for all its practitioners. Common usage defines inquiry as an investigation, that is, to probe, explore, research, question, query, etc. (Oxford Dictionary and Thesaurus 2001, p427). But these definitions fail to hint at the skills involved. Here, following psychologist Deanna Kuhn (2005, p. 4), inquiry is defined preliminarily as thinking well in undertaking the investigation of a problem arising in a real-life setting. Reflective inquiry of a portfolio process highlights the inquiry task as a meta-cognitive issue, that is, to thinking of one’s own processes of thinking and knowing the need to document the investigative process as well as the meaning and understanding one achieves through it. This section of the chapter reports on the result of a portfolio exploration in inquiry.

A striking discovery in the recent critiques of higher education in the USA and Europe is how the critiques today of higher education echo those leveled at elementary and secondary education. For example, there is a charge that although most undergraduate students make gains during their college years, they accomplish far less than they should. Derek Bok, interim president of Harvard University, writing “Our Underachieving Colleges” (Bok 2006), finds college students lack critical thinking skills and the ability to make sound judgments beyond a naive epistemology, that is, an understanding of what knowing and knowledge are and how we know.

Many seniors graduate without being able to write well enough to satisfy their employers. Many cannot reason clearly or perform competently in analyzing complex, nontechnical problems, even though faculties rank critical thinking as the primary goal of a college education. (Bok 2006, p. 8)

Equally surprising is the fact that most colleges neglect to collect data on what exactly their students learn and know how to do at graduation, in contrast to the number of courses the students have taken. Although some professors are aware of the problems of student learning and try new methods of teaching, their concerns are not always shared by faculty as a whole.

Complicating this situation is also the challenge of uncovering what it takes to engage in inquiry and how to teach its skills. Developmental psychologist Deanna Kuhn (2005), in her ground-breaking book, Education for Thinking, documents the sobering difficulty for both children and adults of doing inquiry, from identifying a question, to constructing an investigation, to distinguishing evidence from assertion, and to connecting research with findings, and not just what was done. Kuhn argues that students must have not only the skills but the opportunity to engage in increasingly complex forms of inquiry and grow in epistemological understanding of the nature of knowledge. At present, she argues “… we lack sufficient understanding of what it means to be an independent learner and thinker … to make this a readily implementable goal in classrooms today” (Kuhn 2005, p. 4)

Thus, three problems emerge for teachers of inquiry at all levels: (1) The failure of students to do well, especially in developing thinking and inquiry skills; (2) the challenge to knowing how to teach students, inquiry and its skills; and, (3) the lack of exchange between college or K-12 teachers of these pedagogical strategies (See Huber and Hutchings 2005, p. 26).

One path out of these dilemmas is knowing how to connect, read and evaluate evidence, an ability critical to developing understanding of the inquiry process. But to develop this ability, students must first be able to sustain observation; connect both observation and evidence to the central question of their investigation; and then write up what they have discovered, not just what they have done. In fact, data and conclusions are sometimes not linked, and students rarely connect what they had discovered to their own knowledge (Kuhn, 2005, p. 54). Some researchers in this area have argued for the necessity to move
towards more highly structured sequences of activities in support of the inquiry process, identifying and breaking down each step of the process, such as those listed here.

The process of creating a portfolio of work by a teacher or a student is regarded as an effective scaffold for engaging in inquiry. In my experiences in working with students and accomplished faculty, the portfolio has proven to be an effective scaffold. For one example, recently in my work at University College Cork in Ireland, we developed a new experiment that yielded further insights into this process. The occasion was the launch of a new 2-year Masters in research by portfolio program that had begun 3-years ago within the Applied Social Studies department. I worked with Carmel Halton, the program Chair, in designing and starting the program. Together, we met with students to document their experiences. Here, I report on the pilot class of four students who comprised the first class. The program was designed for practicing social work students who had entered the program to gain new skills and to undertake a research project directly related to their practice. The development of the students in the program offers glimpses into the inquiry process for mature practitioners.

In a new MA in research by portfolio program, students acknowledged that they found many aspects of the research inquiry process to be new experiences. For example, defining and revising their research question and reviewing relevant research and placing their project within that context of prior research. Some of these new experiences tested and enhanced their own ways of knowing. While students attended classes in research design and execution, they were highly aware of how their projects, all rooted in the agencies in which they worked, created subtle differences in how they were viewed, and how they viewed their projects. Participants were seen by colleagues and service users as researchers within their own agencies. They also began to make more direct connections between research and practice. As one participant commented, “When doing the research I began to realise that the knowledge I had acquired over the years in practice was very important and relevant to the research” (Halton and Lyons, 2006). Questions about knowing became central for all and, in the end, a theme of the program.

Practitioners’ Views on Inquiry Through Research and Reflection: Gaining Understanding of Knowing

Students’ views of knowledge, of the nature of that knowledge and of the process of their coming to know, and understand through their participation in the program, are central issues that my colleague, Carmel Halton, and I wished to investigate when undertaking this research. Through focus group discussion, individual questionnaires and interviews, important information surfaced that the authors hope will help to inform and shape educational developments and learning practices on dedicated programs for experienced professionals. This research documents the responses of students to significant program features that supported their learning throughout the 2 years, highlighting the following themes as outcomes of the reflective inquiry process:

- Greater understanding of knowledge, knowing and coming to know,
- Improved links between research and practice,
- New knowledge of practice,
- Appreciation of learning scaffolds, and
- Development of a culture of reflective inquiry.

The contribution that the portfolio process and the course design made to support and extend their learning is highlighted in their texts. The successful completion of the program by all students lends weight and credibility to the views expressed.
Participants varied in their approaches to the research projects. For example, one participant immediately felt a sense of challenge, of not knowing even about practical things such as using the library. This person felt unsure and incompetent, but gradually felt challenged about “my narrow interpretation of events” in the workplace and began to realize there were many number of ways to look at the same thing.” Others plunged into the complexities of practitioner research with a different perspective. One said “Practitioner research identifies, defines and supports new learning relevant to our specific field of inquiry. It is conducted to improve practice through better understanding ... it is better informed by the experience and expertise of the researcher and is validated by its grounding in real-life, on-going situations.”

Yet another participant, a social work practitioner for almost 30 years, saw that, “Being in the field challenges one’s knowledge base constantly, particularly if you are open to changing your approach based on learning on the job. Many of us have practice knowledge of the field that we know we operate from. We also know that to impose services and solutions is often useless unless one engages with the persons or families involved in the research. Yet much research is carried out often by agencies who have little day-to-day knowledge of the lives of the people they are researching” (All quotes from Halton and Lyons, 2006).

**Improved Links between Research and Practice**

As experienced, senior social work practitioners within their agencies, participants at the outset of the program sought to make connections between research and practice. In particular, their views of themselves as researchers of practice posed interesting questions and some challenges. As one student remarked:

Practitioners lack the confidence and the sense that they have legitimate questions to ask in terms of research ... [they still view research as] the occupation of academics and government departments and not practitioners ...research is constructed and presented by academics and policy makers with little day to day knowledge of the lives of the people they are researching. They do not often ask the right questions ... [Consequently] their research serves to estrange rather than engage participants ... as a practitioner researcher, I sought to put the researched population central to the research process. In so doing I hoped that the research outcome would have a direct impact on the lives of the researched population. This was very important for me as a practitioner who was engaging in research.

Another student spoke of how his confidence developed over his participation on the course: “This course has helped me to develop my confidence in myself as a researcher. I now realise that I can do research on my practice and deal with the issues of objectivity and bias that before the course, and even at the start of the course, I found hard to understand and to reconcile ... I now realise that research and practice are not the separate activities I always thought they were. I have learned that as a practitioner, I can engage in practice research that has validity. This has been a big learning for me over the last two years ... I was so afraid of my own bias that when I was interviewing, I stuck strictly to the questions on my interview guide. I did not ask follow up questions or even get the kids to elaborate on what they were saying. I was very conscious of my position as a researcher and the knowledge I had as a practitioner. I was afraid if I strayed from the questions at all I might corrupt the research data.”

The confidence-building that various students associated with their course participation seemed to spread out within the agency. “When I was on the course I talked to my colleagues about what I was doing. I was involved in a type of role modeling. I think it gave them a confidence to think that they too could do the same. Research no longer seemed so remote and removed from their practice.”
New Knowledge of Practice

One student referred to the benefits of undertaking research and the contribution that this research has made towards developing practice knowledge:

Doing the research project helped me to gain confidence not only as researcher of practice but it also helped me in practice by providing fresh insights and new knowledge. If I had not done this research and engaged the kids in it the way I did I may never have valued the knowledge the kids have that practitioners like me and service providers need to know.

The mystique that surrounded the research enterprise was something students battled to overcome. “Are research and practice completely different activities?” Another student named some practical unforeseen challenges:

There were a lot of practical issues and technical knowledge that I had to learn in order to complete the course; This was time consuming in a way that I had not fully considered prior to participating on the course. I also had to learn to do a proper literature review, using updated resources and new.

Appreciation of Learning Scaffolds: The Reflective Portfolio, Peers and Presentations

Throughout the research, students highlighted the importance of the portfolio and the learning journal in scaffolding and promoting their ongoing learning and development throughout the course:

My attraction to this type of Masters program was directly related to its use of the portfolio. I have been interested in reflective inquiry for some time now. As the portfolio was centrally located in this program, it presented me with an opportunity to use it, while undertaking a piece of research. I found the whole idea exciting.

Another student referred to challenges he experienced when completing the learning journal: “I found it difficult to get into writing a journal. I was very self-conscious writing it. I was not used to writing and putting my thoughts and feelings down on paper. It was challenging for me, even more so when I had to read it out to the others in the group [but] the learning journal provided me with a space to think about what I was doing.”

Highlighting the emphasis the portfolio places on tracking the research process, one student remarked:

The portfolio is a more holistic way of learning. The reflective process left me feeling uncomfortable. At times nothing made sense. I had no answers and I found that space difficult. But as time went on I became more comfortable with not knowing.

Nakkula and Ravitch (1998) refer to learners feeling “thrown” and “uprooted” by the reflective learning process.

Students here also spoke of having to take risks in his research practice:

I had to learn to take risks. I didn’t know what issues were going to arise in the interviews. To my surprise the groups were able to facilitate themselves and managed. The portfolio process, which includes the learning journal and peer support helped, “to bring the researcher, the researched, the research process and context all together.”

The students identified the peer group as a place of safety and trust, where their feelings of uncertainty could be contained and addressed. The peer support group promoted a connectedness between participants:
The whole process of making my research questions public to my peer group helped me gain a greater sense of my own identity as a researcher. Peers were all practitioners who had knowledge of the practice and the practice context where my research was located. My confidence developed in sharing my research as the course progressed.

**Conclusions: Creating a Culture of Reflective Inquiry**

One student said that the “value of engaging in reflective inquiry when engaging in researching questions of practice was very important.” The same student stressed:

I discovered that the process of reflection requires the practitioner/researcher to avoid the temptation of second guessing answers but instead to develop a culture/discipline in order to further their investigations. The development of this culture of reflection can effect [sic?] and challenge some of the fundamental elements of an individual’s practice. The use of reflective questioning enabled me as the practitioner researcher to unearth new aspects of my practice through uncovering new elements in the research. Reflective inquiry allows the practitioner/researcher to create new knowledge and re-create themselves within their professions.

There are several contributions of the portfolio/research inquiry processes to practitioners’ ways of knowing. As course directors, we identify the following as potential achievements of the inquiry process with the suggestion that these ought to be the subject of systematic investigations and study. We believe students of this program:

- Have achieved knowledge and understanding of the strategies of inquiry; the power of framing questions, the process of designing an interrogation, the significance of evidence, and the nature of adequate or inadequate evidence,
- Are aware of the kind of knowledge that can be acquired through inquiry,
- Have identified how new knowledge is shaping or can shape their professional practice, and
- Have acknowledged that the reflective research inquiry process allows students to become aware of the process of inquiry at a meta-cognitive level, that is, of how they know that they knew.

**Developing an Inquiry Stance**

_No reflection about education and democracy can exclude issues of power, economics, equality, justice and its application, and ethics._ (Paulo Freire 1996, p. 146)

Many educators today who increasingly acknowledge an imperative to deepen their approaches to teaching for social justice encourage their students and themselves to take an inquiry stance. Inquiry, as interrogation, is being encouraged as a necessity of teaching. In light of the extreme narrowing of the educational agenda, especially in the United States over the last 8 years through the legislation of the “No Child Left Behind” (NCLB) law, with its testing mandates, and continuing today in many countries also with an increasing obsession for testing, teacher educators have begun to ring the fire bell in the night, alerting all to the larger implications of these developments. Noteworthy are teacher educators Marilyn Cochran-Smith and Susan Lytle (1999) who earlier identified the new politics of teacher education as a co-option, a slight of hand, translating the political problem of NCLB into what would become a testing problem for teachers and their students, rather than a learning problem. Cochran-Smith and Lytle urged teachers themselves to develop “an inquiry stance,” to create opportunities for teachers to question and interrogate their practices, consider the unique needs of their students, and the history and the context of their
school and its surroundings. Cochran-Smith argues that this means “new and experienced teachers and teacher educators work within communities to generate local knowledge, envision and theorize their practice, and interpret and interrogate the theory and research of others” (Cochran-Smith 2004, p. 14).

For Cochran-Smith it is fundamental that the work of inquiry communities is social and political – that is, “it involves making problematic, the current arrangements of schooling; the ways knowledge is constructed, evaluated, and used, and teachers’ individual and collective roles in bringing about change” (Cochran-Smith 2004, p. 14). Cochran-Smith and Lytle developed the idea of inquiry as stance. Their purpose:

to capture in a metaphor the ways we stand, the ways we see, and the lenses we see through as educators. Teaching is a complex activity that occurs within webs of social, historical, cultural, and political significance. Across the life span an inquiry stance provides a kind of grounding within the changing cultures of school reform and competing political agendas – a place to put one’s feet as it were, as well as a frame of mind. (Cochran-Smith 2004, p. 14)

As they conceptualized it, inquiry as stance is intended to inform ongoing critiques of the larger purposes of school and the impact of particular practices and policies on pupils’ life chances.

Teachers are being urged to engage in critical inquiry from several fronts. Paulo Freire reminded teachers of the foundational value of inquiry:

There is no such thing as teaching without research and research without teaching. One inhabits the body of the other. As I teach I continue to search and re-search. I teach because I search because I question, and because I submit myself to questioning. I research because I notice things, take cognizance of them. And in so doing I intervene. And in intervening, I educate and educate myself. I do research to know what I do not yet know and to communicate and proclaim what I discover. (Freire 1998, p. 35)

Teacher educators for social justice are insistent in their concerns about promoting critical inquiry. They have been especially outspoken since 2007 when NCATE (National Council for the Assessment of Teacher Education, 2007), the United States’ standard bearer of the assessment of teacher education programs, decided to drop teaching for social justice as a disposition appropriate for teachers and a standard for accreditation of teacher education programs. The education community was surprised and dismayed but began querying what does it mean to teach for social justice? Linda Darling-Hammond argues: “Teaching for social justice is a lifelong undertaking. It involves coming to understand oneself in relation to others, examining how society constructs privilege and inequality and how this affects one’s own opportunities as well as those of others; exploring the experiences of others; evaluating how schools and classrooms operate and can be structured to value diverse human experience to enable learning for all students – this demands how to bring about change in institutions – done in the company of others (Darling-Hammond et al., 2002, p. 3)

Jeanie Oakes and Martin Lipman define a social justice perspective on education as one that does three things:

1. It considers the values and politics that pervade education, as well as the more technical issues of teaching and organizing schools. 2. It asks critical questions about how conventional thinking and practice came to be, and who in society benefits from them, and…; 3. It pays attention to inequalities associated with race, social class, language, gender, and other social categories and looks for alternatives to the inequalities; acting to achieve social justice in schools is a struggle sustained by hope. (Oakes and Lipman 2003, p. xv)

These teacher educators go on, “...we emphasize research and historical analyses that show how excellent teaching requires social justice.” (Oakes and Lipman 2003, p. xv)

But it is necessary “to think of democracy as an ongoing struggle rather than an idyllic or perfect end product. Rather the democracy must be one that Cornel West suggests ‘keeps track of social misery, solicits and channels moral outrage to alleviate it, and projects
Reflective Inquiry: Foundational Issues

a future in which the potentialities of ordinary people flourish and flower’’ (Quoted in Oakes and Lipman 2002, p. 433).

Such a stance is bolstered by theories including critical race theory (Tate 1997), by new research in learning, such as the ways of knowing (Hofer and Pintrich 2002; Moore 2002), as well as the work of those arguing for critical social theory needed in teaching for social justice. Perhaps the most eloquent and long-standing pervasive voice for teaching for social justice is that of Paulo Freire. Especially persuasive is the power or critical theory “to change the pedagogical process from one of knowledge transmission to knowledge transformation” (Leonardo 2004, p. 11). Critical theory has its lineages in several different lines of inquiry such as the Frankfort School, the work of Adorno and Habermas, and includes more recently, Nancy Fraser (1997) and Patricia Hill Collins (1998). In education, some see traces of John Dewey’s influence, but no one has popularised its value as did Paulo Freire (Leonardo 2004, pp. 11–12). Kathleen Weiler argues “Freire is without question the most influential theorist of critical liberatory education” (Weiler 1994, p. 13).

We can say that pedagogy first became critical with the arrival of Freire’s work and soon after ... critical pedagogy entered the educational lexicon. Although it would be accurate to appropriate Dewey as an influence on the development of Critical Social Theory in education, it is Freire’s work that promotes ideological critique, an analysis of culture, attention to discourse, and a recasting of the teacher as an intellectual or cultural worker (see also Giroux, 1988)…. Freire gave education a language that neglected neither the effect of oppression on concrete people nor their ability to intervene on their own behalf, not the terrorizing and structured consequences of capitalism and other systems. (Leonardo 2004, p. 12)

Freire’s Pedagogy of the Oppressed published in 1970 to instant and great acclaim, first outlined his radical educational pedagogy, one he had already been practicing in Brazil in teaching literacy to the poor. But in the 1990s, Freire deliberately revisited his classic book, one that is still the most quoted educational texts in Latin America, Asia and Africa. He published The Pedagogy of Hope in 1994 and in 1996, Letters to Cristina, (his niece), largely a set of reflections on his life work in education, including responses to several critics of Pedagogy of the Oppressed. Several points are examined and underscored in these new works: the emphasis on dialogue and conversation as pedagogical strategies rather than curriculum; the importance of respect of people working together, community building, that praxis is informed and linked to values; and that the overall goal is developing consciousness that could transform people and lead to action.

As philosopher Ronald Glass asserts, “for Freire, the essentially defining ontological feature of being human is that people produce history and culture, even as history and culture produce them, thus both the theory and application of education as a practice of freedom ‘take the people’s history as their starting point’” (Freire, 1994, p. 65, Quoted in Glass 2001, p. 17). For individuals, this means not seeing their situation fatalistically; rather as it is the opening for concrete efforts to transform oppressive realities. “People may not be free to choose the time, place, meanings, standards and so on, into which they have been thrown by their birth, yet they are able to take up specific stances within that context and make of it what they may”(Glass 2001, p. 18).

There is a critical need to consider how hope fits into a critical view of education as well as democracy. Hope is an active force which is imperative to the success of the problem-posing education and the conscientisation process (Freire esposes). Conversely, hopelessness is a ‘concrete entity’ created by economic, historical and social forces of oppression, and is intensified in the absence of a critical knowledge of reality. “A pedagogy centered only in critique becomes a discourse of bankruptcy is not a future project but a constitutive party of everyday life” (Semardo 2004, p.16). Freire is clear that hope alone is not enough. But it is necessary. For Freire, the goal is a new consciousness that would lead to transformation and then to social change, embedding hope in all.
A Case Example – Critical Race Theory

At this point, it seems useful to provide an example of a critical inquiry that has engaged an interrogation into the political and social life towards a new consciousness. I give the example of a long-standing inquiry, of how it began and developed over time. The inquiry is focused on race in the United States and the emergence of critical race theory. I begin with John Dewey and his assertion about democracy in America and then take up the case of the development of the critical race theory, here, however, only in a brief, abbreviated form.

John Dewey in his book, *Democracy and Education*, asserted in 1916 that the United States was a democracy in name only, “numerically democratic.” It had not yet become truly democratic (Dewey 1944/1916, p. iii). But he wanted his work on education, his philosophy of education to contribute to its growth. His conception of a democratic way of life, like his concept of education, is not a means to some larger end but only to more education, more growth. As he summarizes, “A democracy is more than a form of government; it is primarily a mode of associated living, of conjoint communicated experience” (Dewey 1916, p. 93).

For Dewey, a reflective way of thinking encourages an ideal of democracy as an associated mode of living, and learning as learning from all the contacts of life. Individuals giving their best – imagination, hope, courage, creativity – and in return receiving inspiration, courage, and ideas (Dewey 1944/1916, p. 359). But that was not possible in America because of race.

In 1916, Dewey believed that United States was only on the road to becoming a democracy. It did not yet feature an ethos, in his view, in which groups and communities – especially those with the greatest political and economic resources – deliberately seek out contact with others who differ in outlook and practice, in part so that society can transform itself peacefully rather than violently.

As Gloria Ladson-Billings and William Tate assert, in US society, inequalities of race are a logical and a predictable result of a racialized society in which discussions of race and racism continue to be muted and marginalized (Ladson-Billings and Tate 1995, p. 47). In their article, “Toward Critical Race Theory of Education,” Ladson-Billings and Tate attempt to theorize race and use it as an analytic tool for understanding school inequity. They base their work on three central propositions: (1) Race continues to be a significant factor in determining inequity in the United States; (2) US society is based on property rights; and (3) the intersection of race and property creates an analytic tool through which we can understand social, and consequently, school inequity.

These authors assert that race, unlike gender and class, remains untheorized. Paradigms of race have been conflated with notions of ethnicity, class and nation. Other researchers suggest “theories of race – of its meaning, its transformations, the significance of racial events – have never been a top priority in social science… racial theory remained one of the least developed fields of sociological inquiry” (Omi and Winant. 1994, p. 9). Ladson-Billings and Tate go on to clarify:

By arguing that race remains untheorized, we are not suggesting that other scholars have not looked carefully at race as a powerful tool for explaining social inequity, but that the intellectual salience of this theorizing has not been systematically employed in the analysis of educational inequality.…. Our work owes an intellectual debt to both Carter G. Woodson and W.E.B. Du Bois, who, although marginalized by the mainstream academic community, used race as a theoretical lens for assessing social inequity. (Ladson-Billings and Tate 1995, p. 50)

Both Du Bois and Woodson presented important arguments for placing race as the central concept for understanding social inequity. Woodson in 1916 attempted to establish race as a scholarly inquiry. In his book, *The Miseducation of the Negro*, Woodson argued: “The same educational process which inspires and stimulates the oppressor with the
thought that he is everything and has accomplished everything worthwhile, depresses and crushes at the same time the spark of genius in the Negro by making him feel that his race does not amount to much and never will measure up to the standards of other people” (Woodson 1933, p.xiii). Du Bois profoundly impacted the thinking of many identified as “other” by naming a “double consciousness” felt by African Americans. According to Du Bois, the African American “ever feels his two-ness – an American, A Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings” (DuBois 1989, p. 5; quoted in Ladson-Billings and Tate 1995, p. 50). “As a prophetic foreshadowing of the centrality of race in U.S. society, Du Bois reminded us that ‘the problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color line’” (Ladson-Billings and Tate 1995, p. 50).

The second proposition that Ladson-Billings and Tate use to support that race continues to be significant in explaining inequity in the United States is that class and gender-based explanations are not powerful enough to explain all the educational differences (or variance) in school experience and achievement between white and students of color: “Class and gender taken alone or together do not account for the high rates of school drop-out, suspension, expulsion and failure among African-American and Latino males” (Ladson-Billings and Tate 1995, p. 51). While Ladson-Billings and Tate do not deny the roles of class and gender, they insist that race matters.

To place this long-standing inquiry in a larger context, it is useful to consider that the argument for the centrality of race as a concept for identifying and characterizing the African-American experience began at the opening of the twentieth century by Woodson and Du Bois, and it has continued for 100 years into the opening of the twenty-first century. Perhaps today, Dewey might find that the United States, as evidenced by its recent presidential election, reveals that growth in democracy has begun. As philosopher David Hansen suggests, “If human beings are not predetermined entities with presented destinies, but rather are persons who can influence their very nature through education and social interaction, then it behooves them to learn to question, to criticize, to converse and to be modest and fair-minded in their claims” (Hansen 2006, p. 8). Critical reflection is the privilege and obligation of all.

Dewey’s Attitudes: – The Methods of/for Reflective Inquiry

There is an old saying to the effect that it is not enough for a man (sic) to be good, he must be good for something. The something...is capacity to live as a social member so that what he gets from living with others balances what he contributes. What he gets and gives is not external possessions, but a ... more intense, disciplined and expanding realization of meanings. (Dewey 1944/1916, p. 359)

In How We Think, Dewey discourses on reflective thinking and its phases. He also points to the powerful influence wielded by social influences that have actually nothing to do with the truth or falsity and addresses issues of epistemology and their complexity. “Some of the dispositions that give these influences power to limit and mislead thought are good in themselves.... Reverence for parents and regard for those placed in authority are in the abstract surely valuable traits. Yet ... they are among the chief forces that determine beliefs.... The desire to be in harmony with others is itself a desirable trait. But it may lead a person too readily to fall in with the prejudices of others. Because of the importance of attitudes, the ability to train thought is not achieved merely by knowledge of the best forms of thought” (Dewey 1998/1933, p. 28–29).

Dewey warns that the cultivation of the best attitudes favorable to the best methods of inquiry cannot be guaranteed by knowledge alone. “Knowledge of the methods alone will not suffice; there must be the desire, the will to employ them. This desire is an affair of personal disposition” (Dewey 1998/1933, pp. 29–30). But dispositions alone will not suffice. “There must be understanding of the forms and techniques that are the channels
through which these attitudes operate to best advantage” (Dewey 1933, p. 30). Dewey then points to three attitudes he believes need to be cultivated. As we turn to examine these attitudes it is useful to note as well, how Dewey treats these attitudes and changes in his discussion of them over time.

Dewey identifies attitudes as crucial to reflective inquiry in two of his major texts: his classic book, How We Think, published in 1910 and 1933 and in Democracy and Education, acclaimed as one of the most important books ever written about education, published in 1916 in the midst of World War I. In How We Think, Dewey identifies three attitudes necessary to engaging in reflective inquiry: being open-minded, open to new ideas and free from prejudice, partisanship, and such other habits which close the mind and make it unwilling to consider new problems and entertain new ideas; being whole-hearted, fully committed to a task, throwing oneself into it with a whole heart; and Dewey’s third attitude is being responsible, taking responsibility for what one has learned through investigation, especially for the actions that should follow from what was learned. Dewey asserts that the “intellectually irresponsible do not ask for the meaning of what they learn, in the sense of what difference it makes to the rest of their beliefs and to their actions” (Dewey 1933, p. 28–34).

In this text, Dewey identifies these attitudes as the ones favorable to the use of the best methods of inquiry and testing. He stresses:

No one can think about everything, to be sure, no one can think about anything without experience and information about it. Nevertheless, there is such a thing as readiness to consider in a thoughtful way the subjects that do come within the range of experience – a readiness that contrasts strongly with the disposition to pass judgment on the basis of mere custom, tradition, prejudice, etc., and thus shun the task of thinking. The personal attitudes that have been named are essential constituents of this general readiness (Dewey 1933, p. 34).

Dewey repeats his commitment to these attitudes in Democracy and Education. However, here he adds a fourth attitude, directness – believing that one’s actions can make a difference. Significantly, he also adds another name, enlarges the scope of these attitudes to identify them as the methods of learning inquiry.

And he casts all of this within the last chapter of the book, titled, “Theories of Morals.” Interestingly, Dewey argues in the last chapters that philosophy or the pursuit and love of wisdom is another name for the general theory of education. That is, philosophy fundamentally springs from questions regarding human and societal formation. Dewey suggests that knowledge in actual life functions as a verb rather than as a noun. It has everything to do with the quality of life, with inquiry.

**Conclusion: The Widening and Deepening of Conscious Life**

To inquire is to take on the curiosity of those who search. There is no knowledge outside of inquiry or outside of surprise. (Freire 1996, p. 173)

This chapter has explored four principles for a pedagogy of reflective inquiry. The goal is to offer readers the possibility to consider the validity of the principles as pedagogies. It is not that there are no other candidates to put forward as pedagogies. Rather, it is to examine the ones identified, and test their utility for engaging in inquiry, that is, having a perspective towards knowing; making investigations into your own practice; engaging in an inquiry stance to interrogate the social, political and cultural contexts of learning; and adopting attitudes necessary to acquiring the methods of inquiry. Dewey suggests a rubric for assessment, the idea of “the widening and deepening of conscious life.” We will want to ask, what effect might these pedagogies have, on the deepening of conscious life? Dewey elaborates on consciousness.
We are only too given to making an entity out of the abstract noun “consciousness.” We forget that it comes from the adjective “conscious.” To be conscious is to be aware of what we are about; conscious signifies the deliberate, observant, planning truths of activity. Consciousness is nothing which we have which gazes idly on the scene around one or which has impressions made upon it by physical things; it is a name for the purposeful quality of an activity, for the fact that it is directed by an aim. Put the other way about, to have an aim is to act with meaning, not like an automatic machine, it is to mean to do something and to perceive the meaning of things in the light of that intent. (Dewey 1916)

Here I want to explore the role of reflective inquiry and consciousness towards meaning, considering the four candidate pedagogies.

**Having a Perspective on Knowing**

David Boud and his colleagues – early exponents of reflective inquiry – ask the question: “Why is it that conscious reflection is necessary? Why can it not occur effectively at the unconscious level?” They also answer their query: “It can and it does occur, but these unconscious processes do not allow us to make active and aware decisions about our learning. It is only when we bring our ideas to our consciousness that we can evaluate them and begin to make choices about what we will and will not do” (Boud et al. 1996, p. 33). These authors go on: “For these reasons it is important for the learner to be aware of the role of reflection in learning, and how the processes involved can be facilitated.” Considering the learner in reflective learning, the authors argue that the characteristics and the aspirations of the learner are the most important factors in the learning process. They quote George Kelly, who, in his personal construct theory “refers to the individual and the unique perception of each person.... In Kelly’s view objects, events, or concepts are only meaningful when seen from the perspective of the person construing their meaning. This suggests that techniques to assist reflection need to be applied to the constructions of the learner, rather than those of the teacher” (Boud et al. 1996, p. 37).

We will want to ask our own students, their views of themselves as knowers: “What do they rely on and why? How consistently?” Examining the schemes of Perry and Belenky et al. would allow students this kind of exploration.

One of the most important concerns of adult educators for adult learners is that they be freed from habitual ways of thinking and acting, what adult educator Jack Mezirow has termed “the need for perspective transformation.” It can occur in a sudden insight or through a slow series of transitions. Mezirow’s research describes the possible dynamics through which this can happen, insights on how to engage reflection towards understanding. For Jurgen Habermas (1984) reflective activity of critical intent is the heart of the process which can free the mind (Habermas 1984, p. 52). Thus, the idea of a perspective towards knowing is an explicit acknowledgment of coming to consciousness, of oneself as a knower.

**Making Investigations into One’s Own Practice**

A primary avenue for practitioners to engage in inquiry is through investigations into their own professional practices. This area of research, usually referred to as self-study, has advanced so rapidly some claim that it is the fastest growing area of research in teaching and teacher education. The recent publication of the *Handbook of Self-Study* is an important compendium of the field and a good starting place for exploring on-going research.
Taking on an Inquiry Stance to Interrogate the Contexts of Learning

Other researchers find a similar emphasis in the work of Paulo Freire (1970), although he stresses cultural factors rather than psychological ones. Personal meanings or constructs can only be comprehended only in their unique social and political context. Critical theory through Freire promotes critique, analysis of culture, attention to discourse and the recasting of the teacher as an intellectual or cultural worker. Critical social theory, a relatively new theory in education, some argue, is traceable to Dewey but was clearly popularized by Paulo Freire, without question the “most influential theorist of critical or liberatory education” (Weiler 1994, p. 13) whose name has “become synonymous with the very concept of critical pedagogy” (Giroux 1993, p. 177). As Leonardo suggests, “Without suggesting that Freire accomplished his goals before he died in 1997, his work became the fulcrum for a Critical Social Theory program in education that searched for a proper reconciliation between structural conditions and human agency” (Leonardo 2004, p. 12). Leonardo goes on to suggest the implications of this: “Pedagogically speaking, quality education begins with a language of critique, at the heart of which is a process that exposes the contradictions of social life. Through critical classroom discourse, teachers assist students not only in becoming comfortable with criticisms but adept at it” (Leonardo 2004, p. 12).

Adopting Attitudes Necessary for Acquiring the Methods of Inquiry

Identifying attitudes necessary for inquiry makes possible their cultivation through the several approaches Dewey himself advises. Engaging in the attitudes is a way of learning the methods of how it is done. Research today leaves in no doubt, the challenges to learning how to engage in reflective inquiry and prompts acknowledgment and careful consideration of the attitudes Dewey promotes, they are clearly accessible even if challenging, a way to begin.

The four proposed pedagogies have already been and are being tested with students and teachers. They have been and are promoted. But as we examine their sources today and the imperatives they are couched in, it is clear their promoters see them as not mere suggestions. Rather, they urge their careful investigation.

Afterword

Lorna Hutson in her book, The Invention of Suspicion, documents the enormous contribution of schooling to both the emerging legal system and to the development and achievement of realism in sixteenth century English drama. In addition to the forensic developments in the law, author Hutson cites the role of rhetoric, the revival of classical oratory, with its forensic emphases. Narratives embedded in great speeches needed to be unpacked to reveal relevant facts, a believable story, or a debatable one. We still interrogate narratives and their evidence when politicians speak, or even neighbors. Most significant for sixteenth century England is that the audience participating in a drama or an oration, confronting a mystery or a puzzle had a way to do that, to interrogate it.

Today there is a heightened need to achieve a similar goal: To interrogate critical stories of all kinds – local, international, in our own and others’ cultures, politics or the ways of living. I would argue we have a method or methods of reflective inquiry, in fact, several already in use. In this chapter, we have seen that a perspective towards knowing is a tool
of interpretation for unpacking the discoveries of an inquiry stance, of interrogating “dogmatic thinkers who believe they are the namers of truth” or unpacking the excesses of certainty (Freire 1998, p. 87). What is imperative is participating in these, actually using them, committed to reflective inquiry learning in and out of today’s classrooms, and taking responsibility for what has been learnt while efforts continue relatively to broadening and deepening the meaning through being wide-awake.

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