Preface

Often, those convinced of the possibilities of reflection and reflective inquiry, who wish to implement it especially for the professional education of students, find only conflicting ideas of reflection and little or no clear direction for how they might or could proceed. Some despair and give up. But surprisingly, in these deeply troubling times, when unprecedented global and national change surrounds us with financial and ethical disasters and uncertainty, many professionals are turning back to educating for reflection and reflective inquiry with the hope for a new viability of their professions. John Dewey, who witnessed profound changes brought about by war and radical ideas in his own lifetime suggests the nature of the challenge of these times:

“...any significant problem involves conditions that for the moment contradict each other. Solution comes only by getting away from the meaning of terms that is already fixed upon and coming to see the conditions from another point of view, and hence a fresh light. But this reconstruction means travail of thought” (Dewey, 1902, pp. 3–4).

This Handbook, addressing reflection and reflective inquiry, and acknowledging Dewey’s caution, aims to bring together in one source a robust state of the art re-view of reflection and reflective inquiry for professional life and learning. The goal is to make what might appear familiar and easily grasped strange again, open to fresh insight.

Visions of Reflection and Reflective Practice in Real-Life Projects

As a Prologue to this Handbook, I turn to explore the life and work of two pre-eminent practitioners of reflective practice, Maxine Greene, philosopher and teacher, of Columbia Teachers College and the Lincoln Center Institute for the Arts; and Lee Shulman, teacher educator and researcher, of Stanford University and former President of the Carnegie Foundation for Advancement of Teaching. I had thought that at the beginning of this Handbook it might be useful to look at what it is like to spend a life in pursuit and support of reflection and of inquiry. So I consulted with these two people who care deeply about thinking and reflecting and have devoted their professional lives to it. I wanted to ask what has it meant to them? Why do they care? Must reflection and reflective inquiry be an aim of education

Originally I had asked Maxine and Lee each to project their vision of the future of reflective practice to be part of a concluding chapter in this Handbook. But as we talked in interviews, I found their responses to an opening question tantalizing: “Looking back over what you have accomplished in a rich career, what stands out for you in your work with reflection and reflective inquiry?” (Lyons, 2009).
For each, a life story emerged and with it a narrative of how each approaches reflection. What was surprising was that both revealed that they engaged in reflection through a life project. Their visions and life projects though different and distinct – Maxine’s project through the arts and humanities and Lee’s through research on teaching – each offers a way to think about our own approaches to reflective practice. Their experiences open a theme for this Prologue, that is, the significance of sustained attention to reflection and its infinite veins of variability, risk, and satisfaction. This chapter contrasts in brief the different life projects of Maxine Greene and Lee Shulman, examines the beginnings of these projects, how reflective agendas entered their work, and the ways the projects unfolded. Here, reflection is defined as a deep consciousness engaged in how one thinks about and approaches a life work. This discussion makes possible ideas about how professionals themselves might be educated to consider their profession as a life project.

Maxine Greene: The Life Project

Anyone who meets Maxine Greene quickly learns of her passion for being wide-awake, for moving others to elevate their lives by a conscious endeavor, to discover – each in his or her own terms – what it would mean to “live deliberately.” Maxine has several touchstones of being wide-awake. She often recalls Henry David Thoreau and his year (1846) of living at Walden Pond and writing about that experience. Thoreau came to see how necessary it is to arouse people from somnolence and ease:

> Moral reform is the effort to throw off sleep. Why is it that men give so poor an account of their day if they have not been slumbering? If they had not been overcome with drowsiness they would have performed something. The millions are awake enough for physical labor; but only one in a million is awake enough for effective intellectual exertion, only one in a hundred millions to a poetic or divine life. To be awake is to be alive (Thoreau, 1963, pp.66–67).

Maxine also looks to philosopher Alfred Schutz’s emphasis on the sense of wide-awakeness as a concreteness, to being in the world and having a purpose: Schutz elaborates:

> By the term “wide-awakeness” we want denote a plane of consciousness of highest tension originating in an attitude of full attention to life and its requirements. Only the performing and especially the working self is fully interested in life and, hence, wide-awake. It lives within its acts and its attention is exclusively directed to carrying its project into effect, to executing its plan. This attention is an active one, not a passive one. Passive attention is the opposite to full awareness (Schutz, 1967, p. 213).

Schutz’s points out that “heightened consciousness and reflectiveness are meaningful only with respect to human projects, human undertakings human beings define themselves by means of their projects, and that wide-awakeness contributes to the creation of the self” (Greene, 1977, p. 121).

In 1977, Maxine revealed how these ideas connected her to a life project, that is, promoting human consciousness through education in the arts and humanities. She says, “If it is the case, as I believe it is, that involvement with the arts and humanities has the potential for provoking precisely this sort of reflectiveness, we need to devise ways of integrating them into what we teach at all levels of the educational enterprise” (Greene.1977, p.121).

For Maxine a life project is found in the arts and humanities as they provided ways into wide-awakeness. She sees:

> It is, at least on one level, evident that works of art – Moby Dick, for instance, a Hudson River landscape painting, Charles Ives’ Concord Sonata – must be directly addressed by existing and situated persons, equipped to attend to the qualities of what presents itself to them. Works of art are human achievements, renderings of the ways in which aspects of reality have impinged upon human consciousness. But all art forms must be encountered as achievements that can only be brought to significant life when human beings engage with them imaginatively (Greene, 1977, p. 121).
These ideas of Maxine’s carried over the years changed overtime. 10 years later, in the late 1980s, in her book, The Dialectic of Freedom,” Maxine wrote of that time as one of carelessness and thoughtlessness – so like our own. She found that then a kind of anxiety, an uncertainty of purposes, the kind of time Virginia Woolf spoke of as “embedded in a nondescript cotton wool” in contrast to living “consciously” (Woolf, 1976, p. 70). Maxine’s book addressed human freedom, the capacity to surpass the given and look at things as if they could be otherwise. John Dewey, one of Maxine’s mentors, said that he sought freedom “in something which comes to be, in a certain kind of growth, in consequences rather than antecedents” (Dewey, 1960, 280). We are free, he said “not because of what we statistically are, but in so far as we are becoming different from what we have been.”

Maxine reveals how she finds an anchor in consciousness.

“Consciousness, it so happens, involves the capacity to pose questions to the world, to reflect on what is presented in experience. It is not to be understood as an interiority. Embodied, thrusting into the lived and perceived, it opens out to the common. Multiple interpretations constitute multiple realities; the “common” itself becomes multiplex and endlessly challenging, as each person reaches out from his/her own ground toward what might be, should be, is not yet (Greene 1988, pp. 20–21).

Maxine cautions that human beings create themselves by going beyond what exists, by trying to bring something into being:

There is, however, no orientation to bringing something into being if there is no awareness of something lacking in a situation. The lacks, as we have seen, may be due to what has happened in the past, to injustices in the present, to the deficits and discomforts associated with being alive at a particular time and place. They may be due to unreflectiveness, to the incapacity to interpret lived situations. It seems evident that all this holds relevance for a conception of education – if education is conceived as a process of futuring, of releasing persons to become different. Action signifies beginnings and in education, beginnings must be thought possible if authentic learning is expected to occur (Greene, 1988, p. 22).

Thus Maxine links consciousness to education and to freedom, the consciousness of authorship has much to do with the consciousness of freedom. Maxine makes these links because she sees:

“Human beings, of course, devise their life projects in time – against their own life histories and the wider human history into which these histories feed.”

When asked about the beginnings of her concern about wakefulness and why that became important to her, Maxine recalls her family.

I think partly because it seemed to me, maybe in my own family, that people were disinterested in so many of the things I was interested in. They weren’t awakened to the sound of music or painting. It was, [that] they distanced themselves. It has nothing to do with their experience. And what the world called a kind of somnolence scared me, that being half asleep.

“Thoreau used the word wide-awakeness. And so many people live below the level of awareness and I associate that with reflectiveness, because I think of Hannah Arendt and other people who talk about thinking about what they are doing, thinking about being alive. And that means taking the risk of looking inside, taking the risk of asking yourself, why am I doing this?

And growing up I was lucky enough to live across the street from the Brooklyn Museum. And Sundays they had a free concert in the Sculpture Court. And I think I started to go there when I was eleven, because it was across the street. And not only couldn’t I not believe the music, but I wanted to join that world. I liked that community better than my home community, so that was part of it. It was something about music and culture that did not exist in my house.

What connects in my case is literature. Its novels and poetry. Some people are more attracted to music, and we have to allow for that. We have to find out what it is that really turns a kid on, you know. And I think we have to attend to that in children” (Lyons, 2009).

Maxine acknowledges that she sustains herself and her work by always reading. “When I’m reading I’m moved into another domain and I find things I never knew before. Maxine
says too that she finds in Toni Morrison and other writers role models: those” who have real projects and have the guts to realize them, to go through the disappointments, the rejections and come back. Those are role model” (Cruickshank, 2009, p. 2).

Since 1976 Maxine has served as Philosopher in Residence at the Lincoln Center Institute where each year she lectures and hosts literature-as-art workshops during the summer for teachers from schools all over the New York metropolitan area and meets regularly with teachers at their schools during the school year. Some assert that she has educated ten thousands of teachers in North America (Pinar, 1998, p. 1). Now in her nineties, Maxine recently was preparing a syllabus for one of her classes at Columbia. Maxine holds firmly to her belief, “without the ability to think about yourself, to reflect on your life, there’s really no awareness, no consciousness. Consciousness does not come automatically; it comes through being alive, awake, curious and often furious” (Cruickshank, 2008, p. 1).

Lee Shulman

Lee Shulman’s life work as a teacher educator and researcher on teaching had a profound moment of change in 1968. At that time Lee was at Michigan State in the teacher education program nurturing a research agenda, studying how teachers think. Pioneering new research methods by asking teachers to think aloud about how they would go about thinking through a problem of teaching, Lee was concerned to map teacher thinking. Just then Michigan announced its decision to start a Medical School. The new Dean invited Lee to come to study how doctors go about thinking through a problem; an agenda similar to the project he was conducting on how teachers think (Lyons, 2009; Shulman, 1998; 2004.

Lee calls this as a critical juncture for him when he switched over to the Medical Education Program. He brought with him his research methods and his best graduate students. “But what was striking in the switch was that colleagues in Medical School thought about physicians and what they did as professionals in such different ways from the ways we did about teachers” (Lyons, 2009).

Doctors were thought of as people who did hard work that could only be done by people who were of superior intelligence. And most of the people in the public agreed with that and never challenged it openly or questioned the kind of compensation they received. And when you did the kind of research that I did about how doctors think, the credibility and legitimacy that they were credited with indicated that they were analytic and self-conscious enough so that if they tell you how they got from what a patient describes and tells you to a diagnosis; they came across as legitimate. Thus they also were legitimate persons to tell you about their reasoning.

And this was during that period in the study of teaching when leaders in that field did not take that seriously, that is, teacher thinking. The dominant research paradigm was the process-product model where you did not have to concern yourself with how teachers thought, what their reasoning was or how they were reflecting on their practice – only what results it yielded in behaviors. Yet no one would have thought to do that kind of work with a physician – correlating their behaviour only with outcomes not with their thinking. How people think was not taken seriously in teaching.

In medicine it was taken very seriously and welcomed. You are helping us to open the black box of doctor’s thinking and to medical folks that was opening up mysteries of how physicians thought – important things they wanted to know in medicine. But nobody was thinking about that for teachers. So I think it was rather remarkable that while I was at Michigan State they opened up a Medical school that took teaching very seriously. They began with a philosophy that medicine was a field that took seriously that the work of medicine was to solve problems. The Dean of the Medical School said this is what we need to know. It dominated the next 6 years of my career (Lyons, 2009).

But, Lee was very committed to his research agenda and while at Stanford on a Guggenheim in 1974, he was invited to put together a panel for the national planning
conference on research on teaching at a National Institute of Education conference. The panel was the only one [of ten] that concentrated on teacher thinking. The success of that panel led to the national competition for an Institute for Research on Teaching which was eventually established at Michigan State University. Lee and his colleagues were looking at a variety of ways to understand teachers’ thought, how they made sense, how they decided what to teach, or began to develop theories about how kids learn.

And this is where a paradigm change came to me. This was the chance to take work I was doing in Medicine and shift to teaching. The Institute for Research on Teaching (IRT) pulled me back from medical problem-solving to teaching. I might not have gone back to teaching (Lyons, 2009).

In 1982, Lee moved to Stanford University and spent 15 years there. During that time, importantly he came to reframe his research question from asking, How do teachers think about…? To the subject matter of teaching. How does somebody who knows something about something teach that to someone else who doesn’t know it? At Stanford, Lee felt he was freed from running an institute – the IRT – now to focus again on his research – now on the pedagogical content knowledge of teaching. He used the same methodology he had been using with the Physicians’ Studies. He also taught students in the Teacher Education Program who were learning to teach.

It was at this time too that Lee and Gary Sykes were invited to write a policy paper on the potential for a National Board for Professional Teaching Standards and how it might do its work. In 1985, they were asked to develop and field test the first prototypes for a National Board assessment. Lee and some colleagues came up with the first protocol for the National Board for the Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS). Then Lee was immediately asked to create it. Joined by his graduate students, Lee began using some variations of his research methods as methods for assessing teachers – for example simulations. Then came the portfolio idea which quickly became widely accepted. The assessment of the portfolio begins with the quality of the teaching, learning, planning, evaluation, etc. that is documented in the portfolio and also the quality of the analysis, reflection, and critique of the work the teacher presents. But, reflection is not a replacement for action and performance in teaching, it is its complement. But, Lee avers, without an understanding and demonstration of teaching as action and performance, reflection alone is nearly worthless. In 1990, Lee and his colleagues handed over everything to the new National Board and they ran with it. Today, there are 75,000 certified Board teachers in the United States, certified as exemplary teachers.

At this time, Lee began to experiment with the use of teaching cases as a way to teach teachers. He experimented with cases as the core of the curriculum for the Teacher Education Program. At that time he began having conversations with people in higher education. They would ask Lee, could the work he was doing with K-12 teachers apply to higher education. For example, would portfolios then being used with K-12 teachers, with such satisfaction for the deep sense of a person’s teaching they revealed, also be appropriate for higher education people? Thus, Lee came to work for the next 11 years on the scholarship of teaching at the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. While President of the Carnegie Foundation, he and his colleagues also conducted systematic comparative studies of how students were prepared for the professions of law, engineering, the clergy, nursing, and medicine.

Coda on Two Life Projects

Here, two master teachers and proponents of reflection and reflective inquiry have shared life projects. Lee Shulman has been investigating how professional people think, how they come to know something, and what it takes to teach that to someone else. He
has translated this kind of careful thought and teaching through his work in assessment and in new ways to understand teaching competence. He has opened new forms of assessment not only to K-12 teaching but to inquiries into teaching in Higher Education, where he has fostered a new scholarship of teaching. Maxine Greene has similarly worked with teachers across all levels. Her project takes its form through the arts, theatre, dance, painting and literature. Her concern has been with how to promote greater consciousness and caring in living and learning. Her association with the Lincoln Center Institute with its brilliant summer programs with artists in performance and Maxine teaching has created a legendary approach to professional teaching and learning. Through the Lincoln Center project the arts and artists come into schools to work directly with students and teachers. These are not presentations. Rather, the artists work with students engaging them in dance, painting, drama, etc. The burning concern of both Maxine and Lee, these master teachers, is to foster being aware, conscious, and reflective of one’s own and others’ ways of thinking and being.

I must acknowledge here that I personally have benefitted from the life projects of these two exceptional people, Maxine Greene, and Lee Shulman. Both have been mentors to me. I met Maxine through the Lincoln Center project which I had sponsored for the Scarsdale Public Schools through my role as its Director of Curriculum and Staff Development. In the summer of 1978, just in my first year as a doctoral student at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, I attended a week of the Lincoln Center program to encourage the Scarsdale participation. It was at lunch toward the end of that week that I enlisted Maxine’s advice in helping me think through my doctoral work. I wondered if I should focus that work on reflective development. Needless to say Maxine’s warm support and enthusiastic encouragement sent me on my way. She would be one of the readers of my thesis.

Following my doctorate, and while teaching in the Teacher Education Program at Harvard, I undertook to study a group of teachers asking about the conflicts they encountered in their professional lives. I also asked if these had any moral or ethical components. I discovered that most teachers found ethical dimensions in their professional conflicts, but what was most surprising to me was the nature of their conflicts. Many involved situations of knowing, of their work as teachers: For example: When should they enter their opinions into a class discussion, if that might encourage students to think there was one right answer? Or, how to encourage students to ask their own questions? Or when to not allow a student to voice an opinion? These epistemological dimensions of teachers’ decision making became aspects of a Spencer Foundation grant I submitted to create a set of cases for teacher education purposes. It was at a Spencer Fellows meeting in 1987 that I met Lee Shulman, at one of the incredible sessions Spencer sponsored in which new researchers met to make presentations and to talk with experienced, seasoned ones.

Lee’s interest in my work and encouragement were profound in my life. Always so encouraging, asking good questions, making good suggestions, Lee was remarkably a mentor. And I found as I continued in teacher education that I followed his work, especially his work with assessment for the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, and the development of the portfolio idea. I began encouraging portfolios in teacher education for beginning teachers, and almost from the start I began to do interviews with students to uncover just how and what they were learning from the process. In addition, with Lee’s encouragement I started a Special Interest Group on Portfolios and Reflection for AERA, and completed a book on the subject, With Portfolio in Hand: Validating the New Teacher Professionalism(1998). I also sponsored a yearly Portfolio Conference. Lee’s support helped in each of these projects.

Through these effort, I met a young woman, Anne Rath, a Harvard grad, just about to start a Portfolio Program at University College Cork (UCC) Ireland. And we thought of doing some research across institutions. She invited me to Ireland and I went there for a
year. While I was there, the new president initiated a new award for faculty for Excellence in Teaching at UCC. Faculty would submit a portfolio of their teaching. The vice President, Aine Hyland, asked if I would introduce the portfolio idea to the larger faculty. Thus, began a 10 year collaboration with UCC. It was my privilege to encourage faculty from across disciplines to share their potential portfolio entries with each other in a seminar. So successful were these seminars, so interested were faculty to learn of each other’s teaching that a new program of faculty education began.

This was my introduction to working across disciplines and I must acknowledge that this work led to the idea for this *Handbook*. I began to wonder what was the state of the art of reflective practice across disciplines? What could we learn from examining that? I invite your participation in the project.
Handbook of Reflection and Reflective Inquiry
Mapping a Way of Knowing for Professional Reflective Inquiry
Lyons, N. (Ed.)
2010, XXXIV, 606 p. 40 illus., Hardcover