Chapter 22

Knowing Teaching through Researching and Reflecting on Practice

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Abstract

In the field of literacy teaching, effective teachers are recognised as those who know their students and build and adjust their classroom pedagogies so that students are able to achieve academic and social learning outcomes. This is most important in today's world, where education is increasingly characterised by discourses of data, accountability and audit, and teaching is often described narrowly in technicist terms. It is through research and critical reflection that teachers come to know teaching and to produce knowledge from an insider position (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993). Such practice positions teachers as learners who develop strong theory-practice links, are producers as well as consumers of research knowledge, and expertly shape their practice to meet students' learning needs. This chapter presents three cases of early childhood teachers working in schools in rural locations. The cases show three different examples of teachers investigating their practices and thus demonstrating how school and classroom change can occur through researching, reflecting on, and knowing teaching.

Keywords: literacies, rural education, teachers as researchers, teaching and learning.

In the field of literacy teaching, effective teachers are those who understand the learning needs of their students and, according to Luke (1999), are able to "jiggle, adjust, remediate, shape and build … their classroom pedagogies" to ensure "quality, educationally, intellectually and socially valuable outcomes" (pp. 9–10). Although Luke wrote those words almost two decades ago, the necessity for teachers to expertly shape their teaching remains vitally important. Indeed, in education today, the teacher is regarded as a significant driver for students' educational success, particularly in relation to literacy learning.

If teachers are to ensure student learning and achievement, then knowing about teaching and knowing through teaching are essential aspects of being a teacher. Teaching, however, is a multifaceted occupation. Indeed, Cochran-Smith (2003a) described it as "unforgivingly complex … not simply good or bad, right or wrong, working or failing" (p. 4). It is certainly not an occupation where skills, capacities and understandings are wholly learnt at the beginning of education study or before entry to the teaching profession. Initial teacher education does not produce teachers who are 'good' teachers forever. Rather, being a teacher involves ongoing learning and change (Cochran-Smith, 2012; Richardson & Placier, 2001; Watson & Drew, 2015). Teachers, then, are learners and "learning to teach is a process, not an event" (Cochran-Smith, 2012, p. 109).

In current times, however, teachers operate in a world where teaching is characterised more and more by discourses of data, accountability and audit, where teachers are increasingly visible for performative purposes and where their work is often described narrowly in technicist terms (Cochran-Smith, 2003b; Comber, 2012; Page, 2015). It is crucial, therefore, that teachers not only think about what it means to 'know' teaching, but also act to produce knowledge about teaching from an insider position (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993). Teacher research and reflection offer ways for teachers to speak from a

foundation of knowing teaching by developing strong theory-practice links and positioning themselves as producers as well as consumers of research knowledge.

The idea of teachers conducting research in their own classrooms is not new. In fact, teacher research has a long history that includes the work of Dewey (1910/1997), Boomer (1985), Cochran-Smith and Susan Lytle (1993, 1999, 2009) and Comber and Kamler (2004, 2005, 2009), to name just a few. Definitions, however, vary. Some embrace broad notions that incorporate the problems of practice that teachers address on an ongoing basis in their classrooms. This includes teachers considering "evidence-based practices in making decisions" or providing "content based on his or her knowledge of a particular strategy or methodology's effectiveness" (Babkie & Provost, 2004, p. 261), along with reflecting critically on practice, theorising, and thinking otherwise about possibilities for practice (Henderson & Noble, 2015). Others focus on a more formal notion of teacher research that involves "systematic, intentional inquiry" (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993, p. 5) through the collection, analysis, and interpretation of school data.

As highlighted by Groundwater-Smith and Mockler (2009), the field of teacher research is diverse and encompasses a wide range of practices that include inquiry-based professional learning, action research, exploratory research, practitioner inquiry, and collaborative research (Allwright, 2005; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009; Groundwater-Smith & Mockler, 2009; Noffke & Somekh, 2005). Although teacher research can be an individual activity, Groundwater-Smith and Mockler concluded that, in Australia, teacher research often involves collaboration, especially between school-based and university-based researchers, to produce "mutually beneficial and cross-contextual" partnerships (p. 19).

For the purposes of this chapter, teacher research is understood as a broad term that frames a wide range of teacher practices addressing a diverse variety of purposes. These purposes may include teacher renewal, teacher professional learning, career development,

and school improvement, such as ensuring high quality teaching and enhanced learning outcomes for students (Allwright, 2005; Groundwater-Smith & Mockler, 2009; Shirley & Robison, 2004), along with opportunities to create "knowledge about and for practice" and to enable teachers to "develop and hone their professional judgement" (Groundwater-Smith & Mockler, 2009, p. 13).

This chapter considers how teachers can know teaching through researching and reflecting on practice. It introduces some of the literature that underpins such an approach and presents three cases to demonstrate different ways that teachers might engage in ongoing learning. The chapter concludes with a discussion of what might be learnt from the cases and the importance of ongoing learning for effective teaching practice.

Research as professional learning for teachers

According to Shirley and Robison (2004), teaching is "forever an unfinished profession … never complete, never conquered, always being developed, always changing" (p. 146). After all, teachers work with different groups of children over time and in contexts that morph and change. As a result, they have to do the jiggling, adjusting, remediating, shaping, and building that Luke (1999) highlighted as important. It would seem, then, that teachers need to have what Freebody (2005) described as "professional sophistication" (p. 177), the wherewithal to be able to develop the abilities and capacities that are necessary to do the intellectually challenging and changing work that constitutes literacy teaching. Amongst other things, teachers have to be able to "deliver the curriculum … to manage, protect, engage and motivate students, and to cater for individual differences" (Freebody, 2005, p. 177). As Cochran-Smith (2003b) highlighted, teachers need to "know subject matter (what to teach) and pedagogy (how to teach)," but also "how to learn and how to make

decisions informed by theory and research," including "feedback from school and classroom evidence in particular contexts" (p. 96).

Cochran-Smith (2003b) argued that ongoing professional learning is a must for those working in the contested field of literacies. Not only are there multiple views of what constitute literacies—whether we are referring to technical competences or social and cultural practices (Jones Diaz & Makin, 2002; Nixon, 2003)—but understandings about what constitutes a literate person are complex (e.g., Luke & Freebody, 1999). Furthermore, we are seeing changes in literacies and associated texts and modes as new technologies develop. And, in Australia in recent years, of course, we have seen the introduction of an Australian Curriculum (Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority [ACARA], 2016a) and the National Quality Framework (Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority, 2011–2022), both of which have impacted on teachers' work in early childhood education contexts. All things considered, teachers of literacies are operating within a complex context of change. Teachers are also exposed to the shifting demographics of students (Campbell, 2013), imposed curriculum change/s and a normalised audit culture that seems to have embedded schools and teachers in discourses of accountability (Cochran-Smith, 2003; Comber, 2012; Selwyn, 2016).

In a climate where external pressures impact on teachers' work—and where people other than teachers often make claims about what 'should' happen in classrooms—teachers are generally regarded as consumers or recipients of research knowledge (Richardson & Placier, 2001). However, if we understand teaching as being far removed from a technicist approach, we can take up Cochran-Smith and Lytle's (1993) long-held view that teachers are "uniquely positioned to provide a truly emic, or insider's, perspective that makes visible the ways that students and teachers construct knowledge and curriculum" (p. 43).

Through this view, teachers are seen as producers of knowledge, enabling them to play a crucial role in identifying 'meaningful findings' from research (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009), documenting interventions and their success or otherwise in classrooms (Babkie & Provost, 2004), and offering "a critical stance on current change initiatives" (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009, p.29). Teacher research and reflection, then, support the ongoing process of professional learning (Holliday, 2015).

Knowing practice

Teacher research in the formal sense, however, is not the only way that teachers can come to know their teaching practice and its effects. As Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2009) emphasised, it is important to see "inquiry as stance," which is about "a world view, a critical habit of mind, a dynamic and fluid way of knowing and being in the world of educational practice" (p. 120). Indeed, research suggests that reflection, particularly critical reflection, is an important strategy for teachers to use (Attard & Armour, 2006; Henderson & Noble, 2015; Schön, 1991), as it enables teachers to understand what they do, why they do it, and how they might improve their practice. Schön's (1991) notion of reflection-on-action has been taken up in many ways, with many publications offering frames to guide critical reflection. For example, Henderson and Noble (2015) offer a model of collaborative critical reflection with four steps, while MacNaughton (2003) offers six questions to assist teachers to think about practice and other ways of doing and knowing teaching.

I now present three cases that demonstrate some of the different ways that teachers can engage in knowing and researching their practice. These are real life examples. They are not offered as exemplars, but rather they illustrate how three teachers engaged in different forms of professional learning and research as ways of enhancing their teaching. Case 1 focuses on the principal of a small school (Kylie), while Cases 2 and 3 focus on an

experienced teacher (Sheila) and novice teacher (Maddie) respectively. I use the term *teacher* when talking about all three cases together, since Kylie is an active teacher in her school as well as being the principal. All three names are pseudonyms.

The three cases have been constructed in a narrative form. They draw on data collected during research projects in rural schools which were located in low socio-economic communities. In Cases 1 and 2, data was collected through school and classroom observations and semi-structured interviews, while Case 3 was informed only by semi-structured interviews. The discussion of the cases draws on a conceptual framework devised from the themes discussed in the review of literature and emergent themes from the cases themselves.

Case 1: Enhancing teaching at a whole school level

Case 1 focuses on Kylie, the principal of a small school located in a low socio-economic western rural town, approximately ten hours' drive from the eastern coast of Australia and from the capital city. On the Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA[i]), 32% of the student population was in the bottom quartile and 12% was in the top quartile. Almost 45% of the students identified as Indigenous.

Kylie highlighted some of the issues that she and the school's four teachers were trying to address:

We had some pretty tough behaviour kids that had disrupted the whole year …We were seeing gains [in literacy learning] … particularly from our non-Indigenous kids. We still just couldn't get that bang for our buck … for sort of the rest of them.

Although Kylie was the principal, she spent a considerable amount of time in classes and often taught during teachers' non-contact time. As the principal, she took responsibility for the school's improvement agenda, explaining:

We were on that treadmill and never getting anywhere. We were putting in a lot of time, a lot of work, a lot of effort into these kids and we just weren't seeing the results.

Kylie was concerned that she was not being successful in raising the achievement levels of the students or offering quality professional learning for the teachers. She was frustrated by the cost of sending teachers to seminars or workshops, since such opportunities usually meant that teachers would be away for several days due to the necessary travel and, to exacerbate matters, relief teachers were not always available. Kylie's thinking led to a chain of events that resulted in a different way of working and conceptualising professional learning.

Kylie began by applying for sabbatical, so that she could "shadow some principals from other schools". After seeking guidance about where to visit, she spent time in four schools where the principals were recognised for doing "some pretty good stuff". The schools had been described to Kylie as providing examples of "how best schools should run". She also attended a conference, where she collected ideas about how to rethink a whole school approach to students' learning and social behaviour, and teachers' pedagogy and professional learning.

On Kylie's return to her school, she implemented a number of changes, after discussing these with the teaching staff. She introduced a school-wide approach that aimed to build the capacity of her staff, and the school more generally. Staff meetings were focused on the school's core business of learning and teaching and research articles were disseminated so that they could be discussed. Although the teachers were concerned about workload, they agreed to try what she was suggesting. As one of the teachers explained, "We did the whole moaning and groaning; we'll have a go. I must admit by the second meeting, I was actually

enjoying it." Staff meetings "gave us a focal point, and we started having constructive conversations … we weren't sitting there for 45 minutes talking about nonsense."

One hour per week of non-contact time became an early childhood team meeting for shared planning. At this meeting, the deputy principal/literacy coordinator and the two early childhood teachers planned collaboratively for student learning and discussed teaching issues and strategies. They also considered their professional learning needs and planned for those as well. The teachers were happy with the outcomes of those meetings. According to one of the teachers, the meetings were important for "reflecting … I think we share really well … we bounce a lot of ideas." Another teacher noted: "It has improved my teaching so much more in one term than what teaching for 10 years has."

In the words of one teacher, there was an overall shift from "my classroom, my class, my kids" to be:

> not so centred on ourselves now … now it's about what do we want all of these kids to learn. So, yes, my class has to learn but your class has to learn it too. How are you going to do it? Oh, this is how I thought I would do it.

Individually and as a collective, the teachers were collecting ongoing assessment data and monitoring the progress of their literacy program, as well as the changes in students' learning.

Case 2: Building partnerships

Case 2 focuses on a collaborative research relationship between Sheila, an experienced Year 1 teacher, and a university-based researcher in a school where the student population was highly mobile. On ICSEA, 48% of the student population was in the bottom quartile and only 3% in the top quartile. According to the principal, the school served an area of high economic disadvantage, with over 10% of the students having English as an

additional language or dialect, over 10% identified as special education students, and 10% identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people.

The school was the site for a research project that examined the types of classroom practices that the Year 1 teacher implemented when teaching literacies to new and mobile students. Initially, the project had been designed by me as the university-based researcher. However, as the research progressed, the research became a collaborative project.

Like many teachers who allow a university researcher to observe in their classrooms (Honan, 2012), Sheila initially experienced a sense of discomfort when I was there. As reported elsewhere (see Henderson, 2015), she once alerted me to the fact that "I always feel nervous when you're in my classroom" (p. 47). However, despite my offer to leave and return at another day or time, she wanted me to stay: "No, I'm getting used to you being here" (p. 47).

The project I was conducting extended across a period of about nine months and during that time I visited Sheila's Year 1 classroom for two to three hours per week. Our interactions, however, were not restricted to the classroom. Indeed, interactions and reflections on practice continued informally in the school's staff room, over lunch, during playground duty, and so on. Sheila was especially keen to identify the specific strategies that she used when working with the newly arrived students in her class. She had assumed the role of teacher-researcher from the first day we met. At our second meeting, she had already started to jot down ideas for the research project. She said, "Well this is what, the question I gave myself is: How is it different with new children from the other kids I teach? Well, first is the … ." She then continued: "So the next thing … ."

At first, though, Sheila indicated that she operated in an automatic way, not really aware of exactly what she was doing. Explaining her actions was difficult, especially if there was no time to reflect in class or if our discussions were delayed until the next convenient

morning tea or lunch break. However, a research meeting over coffee during school holidays changed Sheila's approach. During that meeting, we discussed the teaching strategies and ways of working that I had identified during my observations and conversations in Sheila's classroom. Prior to the meeting, I had analysed the data that I had collected. From this analysis, I had extracted the strategies and practices that I had observed and I had categorised them into groups: creating a welcoming environment; enabling students to settle socially into the class; identifying where a new student's learning was at; and focusing explicitly on the teaching and learning of literacies.

These lists were the starting point for our discussion, with Sheila adding strategies to the lists. We audio-recorded our discussion as a record of the additional ideas that were generated, but it became evident that the list had prompted further reflection and deep thinking from Sheila. The transcript of that meeting is interspersed with comments such as: "Did you mention that the help of peers is very important for the section of building up and engaging the literacy learner? You've got … but we need to explain how that works …and That's another thing … Actually that's a good point what you said."

This discussion was what I have called "a methodological turning point for data collection in her [Sheila's] classroom" (Henderson, 2015, p. 47). It was as though our discussion had helped Sheila realise why she was operating in particular ways. On my subsequent visits to her classroom, she would regularly walk to where I was sitting and she would explain her reasons for particular teaching strategies and classroom actions. For example:

Did you notice that I was trying to find out what Britney (pseudonym of a new student) knew, but I didn't ask her first? My thinking was that if I could get answers from two or three students before asking Britney, then she might feel more confident

to answer and I'd get some insights into her understanding of the text we were

reading.

Sheila's explanations provided insights into her in-the-moment teaching in relation to new

students in her class, as well as providing a starting point for our discussions outside the

classroom. For example, Sheila told me that:

I have become so aware of what I've been doing to cater for new students. I feel as

though I've got something to share with others and I can learn too. My teaching can

only get better.

It was apparent from my classroom observations that Sheila did not take a one-size

fits-all approach to teaching and that she was able to differentiate for individual student

learning needs. It was also apparent that the collaborative relationship that we had built in the

classroom had benefits for Sheila and her teaching, as well as for me the researcher. As we

finalised the project, Sheila thanked me for helping her to unpack her own teaching practices

and for working with some of the children in the class. She said: "I am going to miss you ...

and so are the children."

Case 3: Critically reflecting on practice

In Case 3, Maddie, a novice early childhood teacher, shared experiences from

her classroom in a school located in a low socio-economic rural town. On ICSEA, 65%

of the student population was in the bottom quartile and 60% of the students were

Indigenous.

As a beginning teacher, Maddie was adamant that she wanted to be an effective

teacher and do the best by her students. However, she recognised that her teaching was

not always going well. She explained: "I sort of was thinking about … what had I done

wrong? Why was it my fault that everything was going wrong in the classroom?" She continued:

> That was something that I just had to work around. There's nothing that can be solved in an instant and it was more the fact that I could … use the model of critical reflection with what was going on in the classroom with the children. So, I started using that when a lesson went wrong, because I couldn't have that conversation with anyone.

Maddie was not ready for the principal or another teacher to come and observe her classroom practice, as she thought that they would "always put it back on me, saying 'You didn't do this; you didn't do that,' rah rah rah." Because Maddie had learnt to use a model of critical reflection (Henderson & Noble, 2015) as an undergraduate student, she felt that she already had access to a tool that she could use to analyse her teaching and to find ways to enhance what she was doing in the classroom:

> Whereas if I used the model of critical reflection, I could see it was either in my planning, it was here, there, or it was in the delivery, or I wasn't relaxed enough and the kids were seeing that.

> In her discussion of her experiences of being a beginning literacy teacher, Maddie identified four steps in the process that she followed: confronting the problem; deconstructing what was going on; theorising to find possible solutions to the problem and to link theory with practice; thinking otherwise, so that she had a new way of acting next time. Her first step was to confront the problem that she was facing:

> When you use the model of critical reflection, you can't make it up. Like you can't fudge it to make it not your fault. It's sort of like an unbiased process because you've got the four step process and you've got to go through it … you can't really sit there and be biased about things, because you can be honest, as it's you sitting there

working it out yourself. You're not having to tell someone, yes, maybe I did do this wrong … I could sort of realise that the days that I didn't want to be there were the ones I had the most problems with. So I put it down to the fact that it was my attitude that was not helping me … You know what the problem is, but that was only some of the time.

The second step was to deconstruct the problem. Maddie explained:

When it was like a lesson that went wrong or I had a child who had behavioural problems in the class who was playing up and I'm going, what do I do to solve that?, then the deconstruct process was a bit easier.

Maddie found that she was beginning to think about how she could have acted differently to "help that child." She knew that she could talk with more experienced teachers in her school, but she also believed that she was capable of finding answers for herself:

Because a lot of the time I've found the theory, like the theorised part of it … it's a process of going through what I know, through a few different websites … or going through some course readings [from university] and finding the ones that do suit you … By doing this, it makes you realise that just because it won't fit one context doesn't mean that it won't fit the next.

Maddie had learnt that she was making critical decisions about what might work in her current context and she was deciding how she might modify her classroom practice. In her words, she was "finding something that works."

What do the cases tell us?

All three cases focused on teachers working in rural areas of low socio-economic status. Each of the school populations included students who did not always achieve well at school: students from poor families; Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students; and/or

students with English as an additional language or dialect. In other words, the schools' annual reports and their data on the *My School* website (ACARA, 2016b) indicated that there was a high level of disadvantage.

Although rural schools have been identified as "dramatically different from their metropolitan counterparts" (Bauch, 2001, p. 204), the cases in this chapter focus on teachers who were working to enhance their teaching, in order to ensure students' academic success. It is possible that the rural contexts—and their distances from the educational facilities and opportunities of urban locations—may have precipitated the teachers' willingness to reflect on and research their teaching and to localise their problem-solving. Nevertheless, the cases provide insights that have relevance to early childhood educators across a broad range of contexts. Although particularly relevant to teachers who are concerned with "improving the outcomes of students who traditionally underachieve and under-participate in education" (Hayes, Mills, Christie, & Lingard, 2006, p. 4), the cases suggest the importance of all teachers "selectively and strategically" (McNaughton & Lai, 2009, p. 59) adapting and shaping their practices to meet the learning needs of their students.

It is evident across the three cases that teachers can know their teaching in different ways. In fact, it seemed that all three teachers, without necessarily realising it, were operating under Cochran and Lytle's (2009) notion of 'inquiry as stance'. All three were learners willing to investigate and rethink teaching practice. Kylie, as a principal, was influenced by the education system's expectations of ongoing school improvement but, like Sheila and Maddie, she was open to new ideas and to ensuring that the teaching was appropriate for the students in her school.

Both Kylie and Maddie set out to solve a particular problem. For Kylie, it was about wanting to assist her teachers to get more "bang for their buck" and ultimately to know that their teaching was making a difference to student learning. Maddie, on the other hand,

wanted to work out "what to do when you don't know what to do" (Henderson & Noble, 2015, p. 44). None of the teachers drew on deficit discourses about students, but instead they focused on what aspects of teaching could be modified to enhance student learning. Their teaching was underpinned, albeit tacitly, by a concern for social justice and for connecting and reconnecting students with learning (Comber & Kamler, 2006; Hayes et al., 2006). All three teachers had high expectations of themselves as teachers, as well as high expectations of their students in terms of learning. As Cochran-Smith (2012) explained, such practice enables teachers to deal with complexities, to be "makers of meaning" (p. 115) and to be change agents.

Strong theory-practice links were evident in the cases of Kylie and Maddie. Although Kylie was focused on the whole school and Maddie was interested in her own classroom teaching, they collected a range of ideas about what might be done to enhance practice by accessing readings and the web and asking others. In researching what to do, they were consumers of knowledge. Yet they were also producers of knowledge as they brought their insider knowledge (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993) into play and began to devise solutions to the problems that they had identified. For Sheila, the collaborative partnership with a university-based researcher was built on trust and ongoing sharing of knowledge, thus enabling her to identify her insider knowledge and to articulate it. This helped her to understand how her classroom practices were working.

In all three cases, there was an aim to conduct an intentional inquiry (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993). In Sheila's case, the inquiry was instigated by the university-based researcher, although it developed into a collaborative project. For Kylie and Maddie, the inquiry was self-initiated, with Kylie using visits, professional learning, and readings to understand other possibilities for practice, and Maddie setting out to reflect on her practice with a particular guiding frame. All three teachers demonstrated that they were learners and

willing to open their practices to scrutiny in order to enhance learning opportunities for students.

Conclusion

The three cases detailed in this chapter demonstrate that quality responsive teaching in early childhood education contexts requires teachers' ongoing openness to change and to learning. As Cochran-Smith (2012) explained, it is important to understand that "questions and uncertainty" are "signs of learning, not signs of failing" (p. 121). In thinking this way, teachers thus position themselves as ongoing learners who will continue to research, reflect on, know, build, and shape their teaching practice.

Suggested further reading

Cochran-Smith, M. (2012). A tale of two teachers: Learning to teach over time. *Kappa Delta Pi Record, 48*(3), 108–122. doi: 10.1080/00228958.2012.707501

This article offers readers a comparison between two novice teachers and demonstrates the types of factors that can be instrumental for success or failure in the teaching profession. Although only one of the teachers worked in early childhood, Cochran-Smith (2012) reassures new teachers that the process of learning to teach is something that happens over time and is "never finished" (p. 122). Her approach thus offers hope to those who might wonder about their futures as teachers.

Honan, E., Evans, T., Paraide, P., Reta, M., & Muspratt, S. (2012). *Action research booklet for teachers*. Brisbane, Qld: University of Queensland. Available from http://espace.library.uq.edu.au/view/UQ:320777

This booklet was written as part of a project conducted by the authors in Papua New Guinea, but the content is applicable to early childhood classrooms in other locations. It provides a practical guide to action research in classrooms, a clear diagram of an action research cycle, and templates that guide teachers' thinking at each step of the cycle.

Henderson, R., & Noble, K. (2015). *Professional learning, induction and critical reflection: Building workforce capacity in education*. Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.

This book begins by describing and unpacking a model of critical reflection as a useful tool for reflecting on practice. The chapters that follow are framed by the model's steps. In the final chapter, however, a revised model is presented. It emphasises the place of collaboration in professional learning, thus suggesting that collaborative critical reflection involves confronting an issue or problem in collaboration, deconstructing in collaboration, theorising from multiple perspectives, and thinking otherwise about practice.

Reflection and follow-up activities

1. Reread the three cases. Find evidence that demonstrates that each of the teachers were learners.

2. What do you think are the characteristics of a teacher-learner? Which of the characteristics apply to you?

3. Think about a classroom situation or event where you felt that things did not go according to the plan that you had. Identify one or two questions that you might investigate about the situation or event. How might you go about investigating these questions? How might you ensure that you have multiple ways of 'thinking otherwise'?

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[i] ICSEA is measure used in Australia to represent the level of a school's disadvantage. The measure provides a score for schools between 800 (low ICSEA, high disadvantage) to 1200 (high ICSEA, high advantage). The measure takes account of parent's occupation, parents' education levels, geographical location and proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and is calculated at a school and not individual student level.