

More-than-reflective practice: Becoming a diffractive practitioner

Summary of article

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Since Donald Schön's seminal address to the American Educational Research Association in 1987, reflective practice has become a cornerstone in both in-service and pre-service teacher education. Reflective practice rests on an individualized sense of self-as-teacher and assumes a pre-existing subject who is capable of cognitively assessing cause and effect relationships. New materiality theories however, can augment traditional forms of professional learning in ways that broaden, deepen, and disrupt educative practices through diffractive methods. While reflection involves a mirroring between subject and object that highlights sameness, diffraction illuminates differences and disrupts boundaries. Diffractive methods enable us to move away from reproducing "the Sacred Image of Same" (Haraway, 1997, p. 273) and focus attention on how differences are materially constituted and come to matter. Based on a relational ontology, they interfere with common notions of self, other, and practice, and invite the continuous (re)configuration of life in schools. This paper explores three ways of going beyond reflective practice, as illustrated through examples from my work as an in-service teacher educator and as the teacher of my children. The focus of these stories include: 1. *becoming-with the world* in which 'teaching' involves joining forces and flows within learning assemblages to contribute to the ongoing formation of the world; 2. *displacing and diffracting 'the selves who teach,'* by attending to the multiplicities inherent within professional practice and adopting a nomadic sense of 'self-as-educator'; and 3. *embracing difference and spaces-in-between* where the act of disrupting boundaries and encouraging opposing paradigms to intentionally interfere with one another creates new possibilities for practice. Through these accounts I endeavor to trace a path and invite other educators to move beyond reflective practice by disrupting boundaries and charting new paths as a 'diffractive practitioners.'

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