

Paper Title: Using anecdotes to assist beginning and experienced teachers to engage in critical reflection on their practice

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Abstract: The focus of this research paper was to investigate how a specific tool, an anecdote, could be used by beginning and experienced teachers to engage in critically reflective dialogue about their tacit knowledge and past understandings of learning and teaching episodes. Critical reflection requires more than a description of an event which caused disquiet or even problems and a recipe on how to fix it. Rarely is the question asked about why that event happened or what was it that I did that might have provoked or caused the event. Critical reflection requires the teacher to step beyond the immediate, to consider their own personal values and beliefs and how those might influence what occurred and the possible means to fix or even avoid further such events. The research cohort included students in their final year of teacher education, novice and experienced teachers in Primary and Secondary school contexts. The outcomes ranged from reinforcement of beliefs, re-examination of teaching practices, a different, reframed and often transformative understanding of that memory of the event and possible implications for future practice. An unexpected outcome was variation in outcomes for the readers and writers of the anecdotes, in particular the different perceptions and understanding.

Question: What is it about the writing process that increases the potential for transformative understandings of practice?