

TEACHERS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Elaborating on why you do what you do

The whole point of the method is to develop a teaching cohort and educational leaders who are extremely good at presenting sound arguments for the educational choices they make. For why you do what you do.

In the video we show you a couple of examples of how you can work with your hidden beliefs, values and experiences and make these visible to yourself. When these are visible, you become aware and are then able to constructively reflect in dialogue with others on how you can change them.

This is what we call a *reflective educational dialogue*. The design and framework is inspired by research into teacher thinking and research into teachers' professional development, teacher training and teachers' bibliography.

"When teachers write about their own biographies and how they feel these have shaped the construction of their values, then they are able to see more clearly how social and institutional forces beyond the classroom and school have been influential"

(Smyth, 1989)

The aim of the method is to

- Make visible teachers own belief and value systems and challenge these unreflected beliefs about teaching.
- To develop an educational awareness and language for analyzing their own practices.

Background

The method is based on the results of a PhD. research carried out in Danish Adult Education by Lea Lund (2015) building on Gary Fenstermacher's research on teachers' practical argument. Lea Lund was curious about how teachers reflected on what happened in their classroom as she believe that much of their learning happens in the classroom while they teach.

The method we present in this video has been tried and tested on over 600 teachers in High Schools and in Teaching Colleges in Denmark and further education.

In professional development courses we have used this method to articulate their values and beliefs and experiences of good teaching. This means that they have worked to construct good arguments from their initial statements about their teaching.

A reflective educational dialogue makes visible and challenges unreflected beliefs and values about teaching practices

"This reflection method is based on building and developing a sound educational argument. Critical pedagogical reflection exposes the hidden aspects of everyday teaching"

(Lund, 2017, 2019)

QUESTION FRAMEWORK

Focus on experience from a teaching situation

1. **Describe** ... what do I do?
2. **Explain** ... what does this mean?
3. **Challenge** ... what experience has made me act in this way?
 - What beliefs, values and assumptions do I base my teaching on?
 - Where do those beliefs, values and assumptions come from?
 - In what way are these present in my practice?
 - What are the reasons that I keep these beliefs, values and assumptions?
4. **Discussion with colleague.** Use the framework in the method – using Toulmin's elements (claim, fact and warrant) during the discussion, acting as the devil's advocate – presented in the video by Lea Lund & Sarah Robinson.
5. **Reconstruct** ... how could I act differently?



Quotation from teacher who tried the method

Through these dialogues, I found that my facts changed from having a focus on the student's needs to having a focus on being more effective as a teacher. So even though I had thought about why I do what I do I found that the reasons were quite different. I thought that I understood why I teach the way I do but I see now that the facts are really only based on my own experiences.

Participant, Professional development course for Dental Clinical Assistants