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	Title and Abstract Title to include: A concise indication of the research question/problem. Abstract to include: A concise summary of the empirical study undertaken.		
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Abstract

Reflection and teaching are regarded as processes that require constant adaption, in order for them to be effective (Ghaye and Ghaye, 1998; Ghaye, 2011; Pearson, 2012). Reflection is regarded to be a complex concept (Sparks – Langer, 1992; Pedro, 2011), with literature discussing various reflective methods, all of which are aimed at facilitating professional development (Mortari, 2012). This study explored the specific ways in which in service primary school teachers reflect and what factors affect their reflective practice. This lent itself to a qualitative approach, which was carried out through the use of focus groups and open ended questions, which were done through the cooperation of four local schools and their teachers. The results were then inductively and deductively analysed and two main themes were identified: Types of reflection and Objects of reflection. Subsequent sub categories were identified within these themes, allowing for an in depth discussion. The findings recognised similarities with the literature concerning the types of reflection used within teaching; whilst also highlighting factors that impact upon their depth of reflection, which the literature fails to discuss. Conclusions were subsequently reached identifying the importance and role of reflection within an in service primary school teachers practice. This study therefore lends itself to assisting in any future research that may be conducted upon reflective practice by in service primary school teachers.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Reflection is considered a problematic concept (Sparks – Langer, 1992; Pedro, 2011), with literature providing numerous definitions, such as Hatton and Smiths' (1995) conception of reflection as 'deliberate thinking about action with a view to its improvement' (p.34) . Despite the confusion over the reflective concept, many researchers still rely upon the investigatory work of Dewey (1933) when studying the concept of reflective practice. He defines the notion of reflection as a skill where one is able to use hindsight in a critical manner to analyse tasks undertaken, whilst also looking ahead to produce actions for positive future development. Regardless of the numerous conceptions of reflection there is a common consensus that reflection is a process that combines the use of both theoretical and practical knowledge (Korthagen, 1985; Ottesen, 2007), in order to achieve the desired goal of enhanced knowledge and understanding (Ghaye, 2011). With this in mind reflection is described as having a complex and cyclical nature, allowing it to be considered beneficial to the teaching profession (Korthagen, 1985; Ghaye and Ghaye, 1998; Uhlenbeck et al, 2002; Ghaye, 2011).

Teaching and reflection are processes that need constant adaption (Ghaye and Ghaye, 1998; Ghaye, 2011; Pearson, 2012) and are therefore considered to go hand in hand. These opinions have led to the belief that reflection is a necessary component to becoming an effective teacher, and to improve pupils experiences (Alger, 2006; Pearson, 2012); which has since caused reflective practice to become firmly embedded within teacher training programmes (Birmingham, 2004). Without being a reflective practitioner it is felt teachers would struggle to adapt their teaching styles to fit the needs of the pupils and the ever changing national curriculum (Jamieson, 1994; Harvard and Hodkinson, 1994). This assumption of teachers requiring a constantly adaptable approach to their profession, has led to the delivery of teaching being put under constant renewal (Ghaye, 2011).

There has been numerous research studies (Alger, 2006; Ottesen, 2007; Pedro, 2011; Mortari, 2012) carried out on reflection within teacher training programmes, many of which focus on the benefits it brings to pre service teachers. For example, how reflection can enable pre service teachers to better understand theory in action, and to develop their own teaching identity (Pedro, 2011). In comparison there is only a small amount of research concerning reflective practice of in service teachers. Which it appears provides findings that in service teachers' view as confusing, particularly when trying to resolve difficulties within their own profession; as the findings fail to relate to the real world of teaching (Convery, 2006). This therefore produces contrasting opinions between researchers and in service teachers, such as Convery (2006), over the use of reflective practice by in service teachers; which suggests further research is required in order to deduce the most effective and appropriate types of reflection for in service teachers. Pedro (2011) and Mortari (2012) are aware of the need to focus on in service teachers' reflective practice, in order to produce a more in depth collection of research concerning reflection in teaching; this understanding therefore provides the rationale for this investigation.

Based on this rationale, the main aim of this investigation is to determine whether in service teachers are acting as reflective practitioners within their profession. In order for this to occur the objective of the investigation will be to gain the opinions of in service teachers on their use of reflection within their own teaching practice (if they reflect at all), whilst also looking at what factors affect their reflective practice and how; which in turn become two aims that are necessary, to begin answering the over arching aim of the investigation. The research will be carried out through a qualitative approach, as the aim of 'qualitative research is to describe and interpret meanings and experiences of people as accurately as possible' (Boyle, et al, 2008, p.274). Focus groups will be carried out, as they are a means of gaining a collective response as oppose to an individual opinion (Morgan, 1988), an approach which is felt to be the best means of meeting the objective and achieving the aims of this investigation.

It is hoped that the obtained results will be able to shed some light on the gap in research, around this area of study. By researching this gap, it is hoped that the investigation will be able to deduce whether the reflective methods carried out by the participating in service teachers are appropriate for developing their profession; which is the intended aim of reflection (Birmingham, 2004). This is an area of study that Hatton and Smith (1995) feel not only needs investigating but is important to investigate. It will ultimately benefit the participants, by getting them to assess their reflective practice, but will offer findings that could be useful for teacher training programmes. Both in service and pre service teachers will be able to gain a better understanding of the concept and methods of reflection in relation to the teaching profession; as educational research such as this aims to 'learn from effective practice, and to seek to improve practice that is unhelpful' (Basit, 2012, p.3).

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Literature Review

2.0 Introduction

This chapter will examine the complex concept of reflection in relation to the world of teaching. Various reflective methods and the impact they may have upon teaching will be explored, whilst also considering the factors that may influence the relationship between reflection and teaching. The use of reflection within teacher training programmes will be discussed, to provide a more in depth understanding of the current use of reflection within teaching. Similar studies to this one will be researched, that will both question and support the literature; whilst also supporting the rationale behind this specific investigation.

2.1 Reflection as a concept

Reflection is regarded as an investigatory process with the sole purpose of leading to professional development (Birmingham, 2004) and the possibility of personal enlightenment (Habermas, 1974). Dewey (1933) believes this is only achievable if the practitioner enters into the reflective process with 'openmindedness, wholeheartedness and responsibility' (p.34). These three components are regarded by Dewey to be essential for any type of reflection to be effective; after all, to even begin reflecting one must be open to the possibility that their practice has the potential for improvement (Ghaye, 2011).

According to Gibbs' (1988) Experiential Learning Cycle, the reflective practitioner must be able to recognise any problems, then investigate and view them from opposing angles, in order for the reflective process to have any consequence. Ghaye (2011) refers to the desired consequences as being, the enhancement of knowledge and understanding, in order for new and alternative avenues to arise that possess the potential for positive and sustainable development. However Thomas and Griggs (2011) point out that the level of our reflection will vary depending upon our level of professional expertise, and the situation upon which we are reflecting. With this in mind Birmingham (2004) refers to reflection as not merely an action, but rather a process in pursuit of action.

2.2.0 Reflection in the world of teaching

2.2.1 Why teachers reflect Teaching is regarded as a complex profession (Harvard and Hodkinson, 1994; Ghaye and Ghaye, 1998; Alger, 2006), and continuing ones professional development is regarded as being just as complex (Ghaye, 2011). Ghaye and Ghaye (1998) believe teaching to be a profession in need of constant renewal and reworking; causing reflection to be regarded as an effective developmental tool (Calderhead and Gates, 1993). Reflection however, is believed to only be effective if one is able to admit that their profession could be altered somehow (Ghaye and Ghaye, 1998). This is in keeping with Dewey's (1933) previously stated notion of reflection; showing how opinions' concerning the personal attributes required to be an effective reflective practitioner have changed little in the last hundred years.

Birmingham (2004) points out that there is no set rule book for the practice of teaching, although reflection is believed to be directly linked to good teaching practice (Ghaye, 2011). This becomes evident in the way reflection is believed to assist teachers in adapting their teaching styles, and allow the varying needs of their pupils to met (Jamieson, 1994; Pedro, 2011). Pedro (2011) believes that if reflection is carried out on this aspect of one's teaching practice, then new techniques can be generated to create sought-after pupil outcomes. Incorporated within these positive outcomes will be the establishment of the teachers professional values (Nixon, 1995), which are essential for being an effective teacher (Ghaye and Ghaye, 1998). Therefore, through the process of reflection, pupils are believed to benefit alongside that of their teacher (Birmingham, 2004; Alger, 2006).

2.2.2 Methods of reflection There has been much research carried out into the most effective types of reflection for the teaching profession, which are discussed later in this review. Many scholars (Sparks- Langer, 1992; Ghaye, 2011; McGregor and Cartwright, 2011) believe that there are a number of ways teachers can approach reflection, in order to carry out positive alterations to their practice. This is partially due to the belief that reflection within teaching should be carried out before, after and throughout the teaching day (Ghaye and Ghaye, 1998; Huntley, 2007; Ghaye, 2011). The complexity of teaching is the prominent cause behind the numerous types and stages of reflection, however, Calderhead (1989) points out that we all learn in different ways and take different meanings from our experiences, so therefore require different ways of enhancing our performance.

As stated throughout this review, the sole purpose of reflection is to lead to positive development, it is then in keeping that critical reflection plays an underlying role in the various reflective processes (Ghaye and Ghaye, 1998). Rolfe et al (2001) state, that critical reflection involves the use of reflective processes to look methodically and meticulously upon our own practice. For teachers to adopt a critical stance they must be open to the possibility that their practice has the potential for improvement (Ghaye, 2011), whilst looking towards what they want to achieve, to enable their teaching and learning to develop, as opposed to what they feel will be permitted (Ghaye and Ghaye, 1998). Richards and Lockhart (1994) feel the best way of achieving a critical stance to ones reflective practice, is by looking at their own 'attitudes, beliefs, assumptions and teaching practices' (p.1). These factors affect all processes of reflection, and shall be explained further within this review of literature.

The use of critical reflection is believed to be most effective when employed through the process of collaboration with others from different learning environments (Brookfield, 1995; Larrivee, 2000; Moon, 2006). Many researchers (Ghaye and Ghaye, 1998; Crow and Smith, 2005; Convery, 2006; Pedro, 2011) recommend this type of reflection for teachers, as teaching is regarded by no means a solitary activity (Heslop and Devlin, 2011). This type of reflection is given various names, such as social, verbal or conversational. For this investigation the term collaborative reflection is used, a phrase adopted by Zeichner (1994) and Ghaye (2011).

Through collaborative reflection Glaser and Strauss (1967) point out that teachers often have the opportunity to share their ideas, which in turn can lead to the emergence of new theories and actions, culminating in the development of new practice. In this sense collaborative reflection becomes a crucial process for professional enhancement and lifelong learning (Ghaye and Ghaye, 1998). For this positive outcome to occur, reflective conversations must be fuelled by the possibility of change, whilst looking at what occurred and what was thought at the time, in relation to what could be (Ghaye and Wakefield, 1993; Ghaye and Ghaye, 1998).

If carried out correctly and entered in with the right frame of mind, collaborative reflection according to Ghaye and Ghaye (1998) becomes the most effective tool for making sense of situations occurring within teaching. This is because teachers are able to share their teaching experiences and question their educational values, which both shape and give their teaching purpose (Ghaye and Ghaye, 1998; Ghaye, 2011). However Ghaye (2011) reminds us that it is important to not solely focus upon weaknesses within ones practice, as the positive aspects must also be recognised so that they can be nurtured and sustained.

In order to carry out reflection throughout the day, Schön (1983) proposes a process of reflection referred to as reflection-in-action. Eraut (1995) and Ghaye (2011) refer to this process as rapid reflection, as it involves reflecting on what you are doing as you are doing it. According to Schön (1983) this method of reflection is triggered when our current knowledge is in adequate, and a quick resolution is required. This as Ghaye and Ghaye (1998) point out, requires the teacher to embrace a consistently reflective approach towards their teaching; and very often becomes more of an unconscious behaviour (Ghaye and Ghaye, 1998; Ghaye, 2011). This type of reflection is hindered however, by a lack of time for judgement upon the situation and context (Eraut, 1995), making this process of reflection complex and only effective if the teacher is able to improvise and respond quickly to any given situation (Ghaye, 2011).

In comparison to reflection-in-action there is a process referred to as reflection-on-practice, which uses previous experiences to establish actions for future development (Ghaye and Ghaye, 1998). This is a flexible, cyclical process which is beneficial, especially for teachers; as teaching and learning fail to develop in a set and chronological manner (Ghaye and Ghaye, 1998; Ghaye, 2011). It combines theory and practice in order to enhance and question the development of both individual and collective teacher action; as it is often carried out as a public activity rather than in solitude (Ghaye and Ghaye, 1998; Ghaye, 2011). This type of reflection is most efficient when the reflective practitioner is able to gain both supporting and alternative viewpoints (Ghaye and Ghaye, 1998); therefore causing it to become entwined within collaborative reflection.

Reflecting upon our experiences appears to be an essential factor in most reflective process, however, for this to be effective Stevens (1996) states that we must recall not only our actions but also our thoughts and feelings. For this process Ghaye and Ghaye (1998) recommend reflective journals, as a means of logging our experiences and thoughts that may otherwise be forgotten. By having these experiences written down the journals act as a constant reflective tool, as they can be revisited and added to at any point within a teachers' development, as they gain new skills and knowledge (Dye, 2011). Reflective writing is a process where the teacher can make attempts to enhance their understanding of specific aspects within their practice (Ghaye, 2011). It is in this way that reflective journals are believed to be an effective reflective tool to help improve one's understanding of their teaching practice (Ghaye and Lillyman, 2006).

Despite the various methods of reflection, Hatton and Smith (1995) point out that there is very little research into the overall effectiveness of them, particularly in relation to the world of teaching. However through Convery's (2006) research we can accept that there are benefits to collaborative reflection, for in service teachers. As he and Day (1993) feel that for continual and effective professional development, teachers require constant support and challenges, which is only achievable through collaborative types of reflection. Despite this many researchers within this area of study, including Mortari (2012), believe that all reflective methods have the potential to facilitate reflective practice within teaching, but accept that the evidence to support their beliefs is minimal.

2.2.3 Factors affecting reflective practice Pollard and Tann (1987) broadly classify the factors that they believe to affect a teacher's actions and reflection in three categories: personal, academic and social. For example the social view of equity and justice, as well as the school culture and environment determine what choices we are allowed to make within our own teaching practice (Birmingham, 2004; Pedro, 2011; Mortari, 2012). Whereas our personal experiences, beliefs and character effect what actions we decide to carry out, from the options that educational theory supplies (Birmingham, 2004; Alger, 2006; Pedro, 2011).

Dewey (1993) believes experience to be the key component of reflection, as without experience reflection cannot exist. With this in mind, reflection within teaching is understood to be heavily influenced by a teachers past experiences, from both their personal and professional lives (Weil and McGill, 1990; Dunne, 2011). As Cartwright (2011) points out, only by reflecting upon these aspects of their lives, will a teacher be able to fully enhance and enrich their teaching identity. For those training to teach it is their personal experiences, specifically those that led them to becoming a teacher, that they must begin reflecting upon; their professional experiences will develop, and enable them to start to find their own teaching identity (Valli, 1997).

Teachers take part in various activities within their practice, which all help shape their experiences and in turn their learning (Harvard and Hodkinson, 1994; Ghaye and Ghaye, 1998). Their learning however, will only effectively develop if the teacher reflects upon their experiences in detail (Lunenberg and Korthagen, 2009), and is capable of efficiently drawing knowledge from those experiences (Zeichner and Liston, 1996). It is through the previously mentioned reflective processes, reflection-on-practice and collaborative reflection, that reflection upon experience is believed to be most constructive (Solomon, 1987).

It is the teachers past experiences that ultimately help them develop their own values, attitudes and beliefs (Cartwright, 2011; Dunne, 2011). Teaching is considered a profession based upon a personal and professional set of values (Scott et al, 1993), which Ghaye (2011) proposes should be derived from what is constituted as effective and ethical practice. A determined set of values enables teachers to decide on future action plans, and helps give justification to a

teacher's choice of actions (Ghaye and Ghaye, 1998; Huntley, 2007; Ghaye, 2011). A teacher's set of values, therefore, become embodied within their teaching practice and help shape their teaching identity (Whitehead, 1992; Ghaye, 2011). This is due to a focus on values being at the core of any reflective process, along with experience, and subsequently giving rationale to their actions (Ghaye, 2011).

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Developing a set of professional values is an opportunity to bind peers together (Ghaye, 2011), as they can be obtained and developed from a multitude of experiences and interactions within the classroom, from students and fellow peers (Schön, 1983; Nixon, 1995; Penso et al, 2001; Birmingham, 2004; Alger, 2006). A foundation set of values can however, be obtained from the school's curriculum, behavioural procedures and the relationships between pupils and staff (Halstead and Taylor, 1996). This therefore, links the school culture into the reflective process (Ghaye, 2011), as teachers must always refer back to the professional standards that underpin their teaching practice; in order to give their reflective actions meaning and focus (Thomas and Griggs, 2011).

As researchers (Harvard and Hodkinson, 1994; Ghaye and Ghaye, 1998 Alger, 2006) have previously stated, teaching is a complex profession; and it is therefore understood that experience within the profession enhances a teacher's reflective ability. As Ottesen (2007) suggests, 'experienced teachers share the resources and enterprises that mediate their teaching practice' (p.41), leading to the process of reflection becoming a simpler task (Mortari, 2012). This then enables them to handle the large amount of tasks put upon them, and to enable them to choose the best course of action for their effective completion (Alger, 2006). Due to their busy schedules, teachers do however, suffer with a lack of time for reflection as it can often be viewed as a time consuming activity (Pedro, 2011; Mortari, 2012). It is therefore understood as Pedro (2011) points out, that being a successful reflective teacher is dependent upon both time and teaching experience.

2.3 Reflection in teacher training

Due to all the positive aspects of reflection upon teaching that have been discussed throughout this review, many researchers (Dewey, 1933; Korthagen, 2001; Admiraal and Wubbels, 2005) believe the primary intention of teacher training programmes is to facilitate pre-service teachers in becoming reflective practitioners. The process of reflection enables pre service teachers to question the rationale behind their actions (Cruickshank, 1990) and as Kagan (1992) explains, can ultimately influence and enable pre service teachers to find their own teaching identity. In order to accommodate the diverse learning abilities of pre service teachers there are a variety of reflective methods used within teacher training programmes (Pedro, 2011); which shall be discussed further within this review. To fully develop the reflective ability of pre service teachers it is essential to expose them to as many experiences and school contexts as possible (Cartwright, 2011). Each experience is believed to provide alternative types of reflection to develop (Hatton and Smith, 1995), and actively experiencing different situations can help enhance the skills needed for pre service teachers to become efficient in different methods of reflection (Jamieson, 1994).

Through his research, Pedro (2011) discovered that for pre service teachers, collaborative reflection was the easiest way to communicate ideas and problems during the busy schedule of teaching. Due to this it is suggested that teacher training programmes should establish techniques to develop collaborative modes of learning (Jamieson, 1994). The level of opportunity pre service teachers have for this type of reflection varies according to their programme, although the use of mentors within programmes allows collaborative reflection to be a process that should be easily accessible (Pedro, 2011).

Stenhouse (1975) and Pearson (2012) support a collective discussion of opinions, but feel it can be enhanced by teachers being observed by others, as it creates an opportunity to gain evidence on ones progress. Pre service teachers have the opportunity to be observed by mentors and supervisors, which leads to reflective conversations that assist in their professional development (Alger, 2006; Pearson, 2012). This is a useful process which in service teachers rarely have the opportunity to benefit from (Alger, 2006), so becomes fairly irrelevant to the professional world of teaching.

2.4 Review of previous research

There have been numerous research studies carried out into the use and views of reflection by pre service teachers, and it is these forms of research that provide the basis for this current investigation. They provide a good source of information for the relevance of reflective practice within the teaching profession and how the for mentioned methods can be effectively used; whilst providing some pre service teachers view points of the way reflective practice impacted upon their teaching . Convery's (2006) article provides an insight into the views of an in service teacher, which opposes some aspects of the findings from the investigations on pre service teachers; thereby supporting the need for this investigation to focus on the views and opinions of in service teachers.

Convery (2006) feels that in service teachers are no longer able to rely upon the widely accepted literature around reflection, as it is not appropriate to the range of challenges that in service teachers face. Ottesen (2007) recognises this stating that the 'turbulence of life in schools, combined with the tacit and implicit nature of teacher knowledge, might not be conducive to reflection as concept development' (p.42). However both Edwards and Protheroe (2004) and Pedro (2011) believe that educational theory, specifically on the 'how's' of teaching are good sources of material for directing reflective thoughts and actions.

Through his investigation Pedro (2011) discovered that pre service teachers generally view the process of reflection as a worthwhile process, enabling them to constructively think about theory and enhance their teaching skills and identity. Mortari (2012) states this is an outcome only achievable through the combination of the various reflective methods. Through his study Alger (2006)

deduces three types of reflection, descriptive writing, dialogic and critical reflection as being the most relevant to the world of teaching. Pedro (2011) obtained similar results whereby he found pre service teachers' reflection was focused around, self, verbal and written reflections; which were viewed differently by his participating pre service teachers.

Mortari (2012) focused his study primarily upon the use of reflective journals by pre service teachers; through which he discovered both positive and negative points about their use. By having to write journals Mortari's participants found that they were remaining in a state of constant reflection, even after their lesson; which Mortari views positively, believing that the cognitive ability of the mind becomes empowered through the continuous process of reflection. However through the participants' responses a negative aspect of the journals becomes apparent, as one participant stated "the fact I had to write this reflective journal . . . keeps my mind distracted from the lesson of the teacher" (p.536). Therefore written reflection has the ability to enhance, but also complicate ones cognitive ability (Mortari, 2012). Pedro's (2011) participants also identified a negative aspect of reflective journals stating that the process became burdensome and time consuming, and even those that found it useful, felt it was a process that they would be unlikely to continue after completing their course. An outcome which Mortari's (2012) participants also highlighted, as the constant reflective state the journals put them in, meant that the process of reflection became second nature to them by the end of their programme; so they no longer felt the need to produce a reflective journal. Carrying out this form of reflective practice created the pre service teachers minds to question their thoughts as a process of habit; which through experience caused any reflective difficulties to be overcome and for their reflective thoughts to become innate (Mortari, 2012).

Verbal and social reflection was viewed positively and rewarding by Pedro's (2011) participants as it accommodated their busy schedules, and for some meant they were able to have several reflective conversations with their supervisors throughout the day. Birmingham's (2004) study supports the social aspect of reflection stating, 'reflection is fundamentally a personal virtue, it can thrive only in a supportive community' (p.322). However as Valli (1997) points out within her

study, due to the amount of work involved throughout the teaching day, there is often little time for social interaction.

Convery (2006) is a strong supporter of collaboration stating that 'reflective teaching requires an approach that is social and collaborative rather than individually introspective' (p.204). To develop his teaching practice Convery felt it was vital for him to gain viewpoints that would both challenge and support his actions, to enable him to professionally develop. This is the only form of reflection that can be identified from Convery's study, as being effective within the professional world of teaching. As he states, the widely recognised process of reflection-in-action, ultimately encompasses 'all of a teacher's planning, delivery and evaluation; during the teaching year, at any stage' (p.199). So a teacher is constantly involved in this process as a result of the profession, making the term reflection – in – action void in relation to teaching (Convery, 2006).

Researchers, such as Pedro (2011) and Mortari (2012) highlight a number of reflective processes that can enable pre services teachers' reflective and professional ability to develop. Convery (2006) manages to offer an in service teachers point of view, where he states there is only one main type of reflection (collaborative), that helps develop teaching capability. As these contrasting findings are based on opinions from teachers at different stages within their professional career, it can be suggested that there is no definitive conclusion within the research to state the most effective and relevant methods of reflection for the teaching profession.

CHAPTER THREE
METHOD

Method

3.0 Introduction

The purpose of this investigation is to gain an understanding of the types of reflection used by in service teachers, and the factors that affect their reflective practice. An appropriate methodology was chosen, as a means of best obtaining these desired results, and the reasons behind this decision shall be discussed throughout this section; along with the processes in which the data was collected and analysed.

3.1 Methodology

This study lent itself to a qualitative approach, as qualitative research is the most appropriate method of gaining a detailed understanding of the reasons behind people's actions, attitudes and behaviours (Gonzales et al, 2008). Interviews are the most common form of this research (Drew et al, 2008; Basit, 2010), and were carried out in the form of a focus group, for the purpose of this investigation. Focus groups enable a collective response to be gained (Morgan, 1988) as they enable the participants to interact with each other, giving them the opportunity to justify and expand on their opinions (Noaks and Wincup, 2004; Barbour, 2009; Basit, 2010; Cohen et al, 2011). This makes them an excellent tool for obtaining both compatible and opposing points of view on the same topics; enriching the data collected (Basit, 2010).

3.2 Participants

A form of non-probability sampling, known as convenience sampling was used as it was suitable for the study and was the most appropriate form for the researcher. This form of sampling is used for small-scale research, such as this, and for when the participants being used need to be easily accessed by the researcher (Basit, 2010; Cohen et al, 2011). Due to the time constraint on this investigation, the researcher needed to access the participants quickly and easily, so decided upon contacting all of the primary schools within a five mile radius of her home; which was done through a letter sent to the Headteacher's detailing the purpose of the study and what would be required of the participants (see appendix A). Those schools that agreed to participate were determined by the cooperation

of the Headteacher's, who also determined how many and which teachers were to participate in the focus groups (Drew et al, 2008).

Borg and Gall (1979) state that the sample size must be decided by the smallest subgroup that will be used; which for this study was determined by the school with the fewest teachers, of six. However, due to the nature of schools and teaching, Cohen et al (2011) remind us that attendance can be limited due to the availability and free time of teachers. This affecting factor determined the number of participants within each focus group, which ranged from three to five and the total number of focus groups carried out which was four. Drew et al (2008) point out that qualitative research can be effective with both small and large numbers of participants. Therefore the small number of focus groups for this study should not affect the overall outcome of the data collected. Ottesen (2007) proves that a small sample size can be effective within educational research such as this, by interviewing only four trainee teachers.

3.3 *Ethics*

Due to using human subjects, there becomes an ethical dimension to this investigation, whereby permission and confidentiality of the participants must be addressed (Drew et al, 2008; Cohen et al, 2011). Consent forms were used to obtain direct consent from each participant (see appendix, B), which is Drew et al's (2008) favoured form of obtaining consent. The forms were signed at the start of each focus group, where the researcher also informed the participants about the purpose of the study, what was expected of them during the interview and what would be done with the information obtained; which the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC, 2010) point out are key principles of ethical research.

To ensure the confidentiality of the participants after the interviews, they were appointed pseudonyms, just as Pedro (2011) did within his investigation. Even though pseudonyms were given, it is important to ensure the participants responses are not shared with anyone outside the investigation; as the responses are made up of views and opinions that may be conflicting (Cohen et al, 2011). The primary data collected from this investigation was viewed only by the researcher, and reported and shared with their mentor.

3.4 Pilot Study

A pilot study is a method supported by educational researchers Basit (2010) and Cohen et al (2011), for ensuring and increasing the reliability of an investigation. Basit (2010) points out that the purpose of the pilot study is to inform the overall study, so the methods used must reflect those of the main investigation.

According to many researchers (Oppenheim, 1992; Wragg, 1999; Marshall and Rossman, 2006; Cohen et al, 2011) there are numerous useful features of a pilot study. The pilot study within this investigation helped identify an approximate duration of time needed to conduct each focus group. It was also evident through the pilot study that the wording of one specific question needed altering, as the participants failed to understand what was being asked. The first question in the concept of reflection section of the interview plan (see appendix C) seemed too vague, so was altered to "When I say the term reflection what do you think of, in relation to your teaching?" The change led to an automatic response from the pilot study participants. Basit (2010) supports the use of pilot studies as a means of helping in this way, as altering the questioning can reduce the participant's non-response time, whilst ensuring the questions are appropriate for gaining the intended information from the participants.

Basit (2010) clearly states that the information gathered within the pilot study should not be included within the analysis of the main investigation. However, the data gathered from this pilot study is included in the final investigation as there was only one minor alteration needed for the future focus groups; making the responses appear as useful as those that would be gathered from the forthcoming focus groups. Due to the small sample size that was available for this investigation, it was felt the responses obtained within the pilot study could not be dismissed. Especially as Drew et al (2008) state it is important to gain data from as many sources as possible 'to create a valid description and complete a valid analysis' (p.234); and the richness of data collected provided enough justification for its inclusion within the main study.

3.5 Procedure

The data collection was carried out over a period of four weeks, with one interview per week. The interview dates were determined by the schools, as Creswell (2005) and Mertens (2005) state they were the ones helping the researcher and should therefore be treated with consideration.

For each of the interviews there was a pre determined set of questions (see appendix D), which was made up of open ended questions. This method of questioning is regarded by a number of researchers (Byrne, 2004; Silverman, 2006; Cohen et al, 2011) to be the most effective means of gaining a realistic perception of participant's experiences and opinions. They therefore lent themselves to this form of research, in the same way that they enabled Pedro (2011) to gain the opinions of trainee teachers on the importance of reflective practice within their training. Open-ended questions are believed to create a conversational flow, which often leads to participants raising important issues that would not be covered by the interview guide, and which in turn enriches the collection of data (Denzin, 1970; Yin, 2003; Basit, 2010).

With the development of a conversational flow it is important that the researcher remains flexible, as the question plan often alters in sequence (Rubin and Rubin, 1995; Kvale, 2009). By being flexible the researcher was able to develop supplementary questions to prompt the participants to expand on some of their responses (Basit, 2010), ensuring that they gained as much in depth data out of the participants interactions as possible (Rubin and Rubin, 1995). Kvale (2009) states it is up to the researcher to determine when to probe for more in depth questioning, and how closely they wish to stick to the interview plan. However, Basit (2010) points out that it is important 'that all of the questions asked relate to, and seek to address, our research questions' (p.104); whilst ensuring some of the same questions are asked in all of the interviews (Basit, 2010).

In order to avoid overwhelming the participants a single question was proposed at a time, and the terminology used was regarded to be easily understood by the participants; an aspect of interviewing that Drew et al (2008) feel is necessary. To ensure the participants remained relaxed and were producing responses that reflected their own views, the interviewer ensured that

they did not impose their own beliefs and assumptions upon the participants; which Basit (2010) and Cohen et al (2011) believe is essential to ensure the data obtained is both trustworthy and informative. Trustworthiness is regarded as the qualitative version of validity and reliability, and is a factor that must be addressed when collecting qualitative data, to ensure the conclusions that arise are accurate and of good quality (Drew et al, 2008; Cohen et al, 2011).

Each interview carried out took approximately 15 minutes and were all audio-taped, as this is a method of providing in-depth responses, and ensuring no response is forgotten (Basit, 2010). Each interview was then transcribed, which acts as the initial stage of data analysis (Kvale, 2009). Cohen et al (2011) point out that transcribing can be limiting in the sense that it fails to reflect the non-verbal, social encounter, which makes focus groups so effective. However notes were also taken throughout the interview, which Basit (2010) states is often a good means of recording non-verbal aspects of an interview which would often be forgotten. For these focus groups the researcher took notes, to act as a reminder for further questioning within the interview, as a result of some of the participant's responses.

The field notes that were taken throughout the focus groups provided useful for one particular focus group, as it was discovered at the end of the interview that the audio-recorder had stopped working fairly early into the interview. Kvale (2009) does highlight that this is an unfortunate issue that can occur due to technical issues, and could not have been prevented or planned for; as 'it is impossible to anticipate all the contingencies that will occur during the data collection' (Drew et al, 2008, p.49). However, the interviewer was able to discuss with the teachers immediately after the interview the key points that they could recall saying, so they could be added to the notes previously taken. The interview was then transcribed as best as possible straight after the interview had been conducted; which Basit (2010) states should occur with all interviews, as it means the interviewer should still be able to recall what the participants said. The data collected from this interview will still be included in the data analysis of the study; although it must be pointed out that the transcription of it is not as detailed as the other interviews.

3.6 *Data Analysis*

Cohen et al (2011) point out that qualitative data can often be highly detailed, so it is important for the researcher to begin selecting what information they wish to choose and sequencing it as soon as possible. For this investigation a coding scheme was adopted similar to that carried out by Alger (2006), Ottesen (2007) and Pedro (2011) for their investigations.

The use of a coding system allows patterns and, or differences within the participants responses to be identified (Lewins and Silver, 2007; Ottesen, 2007). There are two alternative approaches to data analysis of this kind: inductive and deductive analysis (Drew et al, 2008). For this investigation the researcher began with a deductive approach, as she had some preconceived ideas for coding based on the theory. Through reading of the transcripts, inductive analysis was adopted, as new areas of theory emerged that had not been thought of previously by the researcher (Drew et al, 2008). By carrying out both approaches the researcher was able to ensure that the coding system was based upon both theory and the participant's responses (Kvale, 2009). To ensure the data was analysed effectively and all points were included a constant comparative method was adopted. This is a rigorous process of analysis that Drew et al (2008) believe often leads to sub categories emerging from the main themes already identified. Basit (2010) supports this, pointing out that this process of analysis identifies themes or sub categories from qualitative data 'until there is not further variation and data saturation is reached' (p.192). This method was carried out by both Alger (2006) and Pedro (2011) in their investigations and it proved highly useful, thereby supporting and reinforcing the researcher's choice to implement this form of data analysis.

CHAPTER FOUR
RESULTS

Results

4.0 Introduction

This section shall discuss the themes and subsequent sub categories which were identified from the participant's responses, in relation to the aims of the investigation. In order to provide a clear and in depth explanation of this, both description and direct quotations shall be used; with the transcripts being used interchangeably in order to enrich the findings being put forward. It is important to remember that all of the names mentioned are pseudonyms in order to protect the participants' confidentiality.

Figure 1 illustrates how the two main themes and their associated sub categories relate to the investigations aims. The sub categories were established as the themes identified were too broad, and the data needed to be coded into more manageable sections (Basit, 2010). The sub categories were identified through both deductive and inductive analysis, as previously explained in the data analysis section.

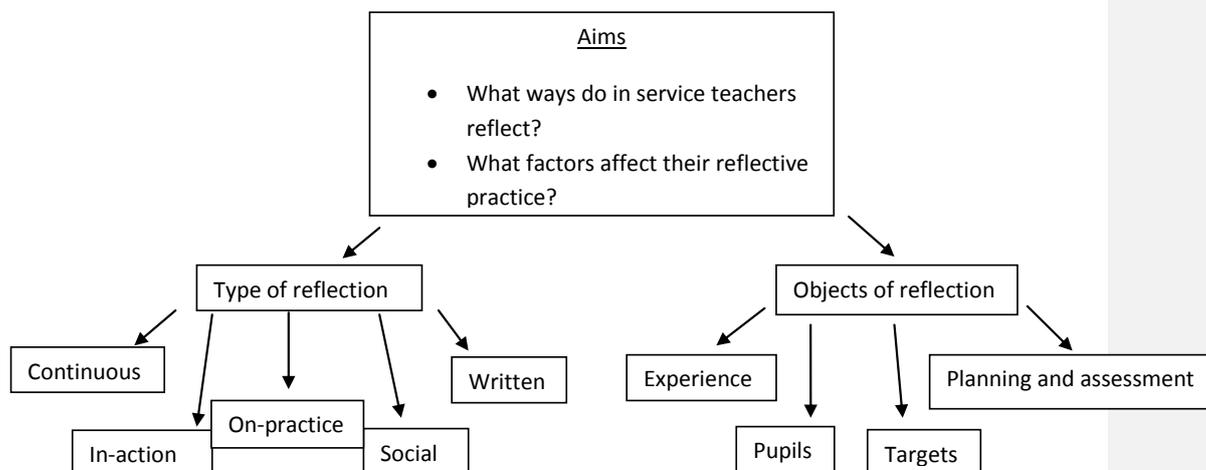


Figure 1: Identified themes and sub categories in relation to the research aims.

4.1.0 *Types of reflection*

Within this theme five types of reflection were identified: continuous, in-action, on-practice, written and social. Continuous reflection was the only sub category to emerge through inductive analysis; the other sub categories were pre determined through deductive analysis. All of the sub categories shall be discussed individually to provide a clear understanding of the participants' responses in relation to this main theme.

4.1.1 *Continuous Reflection* Within the participants teaching profession reflection was being viewed as a continuous process, as according to Dafydd: 'Teaching, it's not nine till five, you're always thinking about it, you're constantly reflecting'. Martin agreed with this saying: 'It's just part of the day to day teaching life'. Due to this, the participants were failing to realise that they were specifically engaging in reflection until questioning around their reflective methods began. Reflection had become such a natural and unconscious process to them, as Rhys commented: 'I'm sure we're doing it subconsciously'. They were no longer viewing reflection as a separate aspect of their teaching practice, as according to Chris: 'I think when you start teaching for real it becomes much more instinctive'.

4.1.2 *Reflection in-action* This type of reflection became apparent when the teachers began discussing the process of reflection that they go through during their lessons. With Hobbs saying: 'Often you end up reflecting as the lesson's going on'. Which was supported by Ryan commenting: 'I think to a certain extent, you do it naturally, you evaluate your lesson as you're going along'. The reason behind the use of this type of reflection appeared to be, so that the teachers could ensure they were delivering their lessons as successfully as possible. In the words of Rhys: 'Within the lesson if it's going like a disaster, you've got to scrap it. I think it's important to be able to recognise that'.

4.1.3 *Reflection on-practice* With regard to the improvement of their lessons, the teachers discussed how they carry out an alternative type of reflection to the one previously mentioned. Ryan explained clearly the process that reflection on-practice requires, and the positive outcomes it can have on teaching practice:

‘One thing we try and do is be reflective. We reflect on how well our lessons have gone and in part of that you evaluate how well you think the pupils have done, what went well in a lesson, what didn’t go well and what wouldn’t we do again. And hopefully the next time you do that lesson you wouldn’t make the same mistakes’.

4.1.4 *Written reflection* All of the teachers discussed how they are required to carry out planning and assessment documents, which enable them to report some of their reflective thoughts for future reference. In the words of Debbie: ‘We write on our planning documents, what needs to be revisited’.

Previous research on reflection within teaching focuses predominantly on this type of reflection. Due to this, it was felt that the opinions of the participants concerning their use of written reflection during their teacher training needed to be obtained. These opinions could then be compared against their current views of this type of reflection within their teaching practice, to gain a broader understanding of the relevance this type of reflection has within the professional world of teaching.

Within their teacher training many of the teachers viewed written reflection as a very time consuming activity, with Kath saying: ‘It was way too much! It just took forever’. However, despite the workload it created the participants explained that it aided their development as teachers. In the words of Martin: ‘It helped you reflect on what was going well and what wasn’t’. With Pugh going as far as stating that: ‘I do still use the tools they taught me like writing my thoughts down. It’s just done in a completely different way. As this is real life teaching, teacher training isn’t quite real life’.

For many of the participants, their view of written reflection has changed very little from when they were training; with Martin expressing his view as: 'we're having to do too much paperwork at the moment and a lot of the stuff we write down isn't benefiting the child'. Despite the teachers agreeing that there is a lot of paperwork created through this type of reflection, Hughes commented on the benefits it has for the pupils: 'Doing the weekly planning, gives you a chance to write down the strong and weak achievements of the children. It does mean a lot of paperwork though'. Therefore it could be said that both Hughes and Martin discussed the relevance of this type of reflection in opposing ways. However, both participants viewed this type of reflection as a process that should be carried out with pupil development in mind. Which Pugh supported, saying:

'The plans are useful in the sense that writing them helps you realise the areas where certain children need improving, or are doing particularly well in. You become aware of things that you might not necessarily think about if you didn't have to write about them'.

There appeared to be an overriding consensus, despite the negative comments, that written reflection is a beneficial process to teaching; as long as there is a balance between teaching and writing. Pugh was such a believer of this type of reflection that she pointed out: 'I write little notes at the end of every session. But only important points. They can be good or bad points on how things went. Just to remind myself later on'.

4.1.5 *Social reflection* The teachers all mentioned how they have weekly meetings, concerning their planning and assessment documents. Within these meetings the teachers mentioned how they have the opportunity to discuss and share ideas with each other, within a formal setting. In the words of Pugh: 'We have staff meetings where things will come up and ideas will get shared amongst each other'. Which was supported by Martin: 'When we are planning out work for the next week, we are all discussing, and because we plan as a whole school then we reflect as a group'. Debbie specifically pointed out how beneficial she finds this type of reflection, as opposed to the individual approach to planning within her previous school in New Zealand: 'You kind of felt more isolated there. It's easy

here because everyone's bouncing off each other with ideas and sharing good practice'.

Despite having these formal meetings, the teachers pointed out that they also discuss ideas on an informal basis throughout their day, as Dafydd pointed out: 'The staff are forever talking about students during break times!' Pugh supported this saying: 'We often just make casual talk with each other in passing, so I don't suppose we see it as reflecting as such. It's more the general conversation that goes on day to day'. This shows how the participants were viewing reflection as an incorporation of their practice, as opposed to it being a separate process.

Through the participants responses it became apparent that the reflective discussions that occur informally, often concern personal thoughts; as Rhian commented: 'If something's gone terrible we can have a moan!' Whilst the reflective conversations during the formal meetings were less personal and more pupil orientated, with the national curriculum being the focus of reflection; as Ryan clearly pointed out: 'When we reflect, we actually do it formally against certain criteria'.

In addition to these types of social reflection, the participants also mentioned that they go on courses, which often give them an opportunity to reflect and share good practice with fellow teachers. Grace was a firm supporter of courses helping her profession in this way, saying:

'During the courses you meet with teachers from Powys, or other counties. So you reflect with them and gather ideas from other people, and hear how things went in their schools. So you reflect with more than just your school community. That's the most useful thing about courses'.

Despite Grace discussing courses in such a positive manner Jamie felt they were a hindrance to his teaching, commenting that: 'Going on a course is hard, because the day after you've got nothing to reflect on, from what the pupils did before'. Thereby intertwining reflection on-practice with this social type of reflection, and highlighting the importance reflection on-practice within teaching.

Many of the teachers also highlighted how they socially reflect with their Learning Support Assistants (LSA's), enabling them to gain two opinions on the same children. Thereby supplying extra reflective evidence to support any actions that they may wish to carry out. Hobbs discussed how she reflects with her LSA to bring about positive action:

'I often talk with the LSA in my class. If I think a certain child needs to work on a certain thing, then I'll discuss it with her. If we both agree then she'll often do some one on one work with that child, to get them caught up with the rest of the class and to help them achieve their target'.

4.2.0 *Objects of Reflection*

Within this theme four sub categories were identified: planning and assessment, targets, experience and pupils. All of these were identified inductively as being objects that assist the teachers' reflective practice. The participants' discussions around these sub categories showed they often intertwined with each other, however for ease of understanding each sub category shall be discussed separately.

4.2.1 *Planning and Assessment* The compulsory documents the teachers have to carry out as part of their pupil assessments and lesson planning became viewed as their main object of reflection. With Martin saying: 'We'd see reflection as assessment'. These documents were helpful for reflective purposes by enabling the teachers to look back, to see how successful or unsuccessful their lessons were. In the words of Grace: 'It's when you go back to look at planning, you're reflecting on how activities have gone'. Chris pointed out another benefit the documents have, with regards to the pupils: 'we keep a record of each pupil with different units we do, and that's written on a piece of paper so we can reflect. So we can scan through to see how well they're doing'.

4.2.2 *Targets* The teachers discussed how they create individual or group targets for their pupils, which have a combination of short and long term objectives. The teachers use these targets as objects of reflection to assist them in identifying the targets for their next lessons, as Hobbs points out: 'It's the achievement or lack of achievement of these targets that helps me reflect. Ready to set the next weeks targets'. Which Pugh supported saying: 'These can give you points to reflect on as you don't often have the whole class achieving the target. So it gives you pointers'.

Through the teachers discussions it became evident that the setting of targets was not merely for their own personal development, but also for the pupils benefit, as Pugh pointed out: 'it gives the children something to work towards for that lesson so it helps them know if their achieving'. Which Chris also believed, saying: 'They know what they can't do and what they need to do'.

The teachers all agreed that the targets they set are related to the curriculum, but as Hughes said: 'We do have to aim to reach targets set by the curriculum. But I don't necessarily think about that when I'm setting my own targets'. However Chris points out that the curriculum does play a beneficial role in establishing the targets: 'it shows you exactly what the next step is and it focuses future teaching'.

4.2.3 *Pupils* Many of the teachers referred to how they get the pupils to reflect upon their own and each other's work, which Hughes discussed: 'with the upper school children the teachers often get them to do their own reflection. But also they often do exercises where they get the children to reflect on each other's work'. Sally recognised the benefits this process has for the pupils, saying: 'it helps them reflect on what they've done well and what they could do to improve'. Using the children and reflection in this way helps to develop the pupils reflective skills, whilst also benefiting the teachers as Chris pointed out: 'they become so good at reflecting on their own work, that quite often you've not got much too add'.

In a similar way to this, the teachers also discussed how they rely on feedback from the pupils to help them reflect on the success of a lesson. Martin talked about how important he felt it is to get the children reflecting in this way: 'You might perceive yourself as having had another fantastic lesson. But if you don't reflect yourself and get them to reflect, they might have totally missed the objective'. Ryan also supported using the pupils as an object of reflection, saying: 'their own personal judgements help guide you as to how well they've done'.

The final discussion concerning the pupils as an object of reflection was the marking of their books. Grace clearly pointed out how this compulsory aspect of teaching can be viewed as reflecting: 'I suppose marking is reflecting back on how well the children have coped with things'. Through the process of marking Jamie stated: 'we're basically reflecting on the children's achievements'. The teachers therefore felt that the marking process produced reflective thoughts that enabled them to prepare better for their future lessons. In the words of Sally: 'For future lessons, when you look back you can say some children worked fine with that, so I can push them on in the next bit, or that other children need to go over similar sort of skills'. Dafydd also discussed how reflecting on the achievements of his pupils helps him, particularly with establishing the forthcoming targets for his pupils: 'As you mark their work then you set targets on ways that the children can improve and as you mark the next weeks work then, you probably look back on the previous targets to see if they've been met'.

4.2.4 Experience Through their discussions the teachers found it necessary to point out that many aspects of their teaching practice have become easier with experience. In the words of Chris: 'I think when you start teaching for real it becomes much more instinctive, and you take some things on assumption'. The teachers were using their experience to accelerate their reflective processes, for example as Jamie mentioned: 'Quite often it's not documented but it's in your head'. In this way their reflective processes were being simplified, as a consequence of being quicker. Chris understood this saying: 'Your instinct is good and it gives you the general trends, but having something written down is very useful, it gives you something to pin point'.

CHAPTER FIVE
DISCUSSION

Discussion

This section provides an in depth critical discussion concerning the investigations results in relation to the relevant literature. The literature shall be used to both question and support the findings with regards to the main aims of the investigation.

It is agreed that there is very little opportunity for reflection within teaching, and that social reflection is the type that best fits into a teacher's busy schedule (Convery, 2006; Pedro, 2011). It is therefore not surprising that the results showed that social reflection was the most common type of reflection carried out by the teachers. As they continuously carried out verbal types of reflection during their teaching day, although often on an informal basis as mere personal conversations. According to Ghaye and Ghaye (1998) reflection is aimed at creating some kind of development, and should therefore contain some form of critical reflection. It could be suggested that these informal types of reflection will lack the depth needed for critical reflection, making their effect on professional development questionable.

The findings do show opportunities for formal types of social reflection to arise, through meetings and courses. These opportunities are believed to be the most effective for allowing critical reflection to emerge, leading to professional development (Brookfield, 1995; Larrivee, 2000; Moon, 2006). The teachers are able to share ideas and good practice, which Ottesen (2007) recognised as being an aspect of reflection that only in service teachers have the opportunity for. The findings therefore support the literature, in the belief that social reflection can positively assist in developing in service teachers practice.

Despite social reflection appearing to be favoured by the participants, written reflection could not be avoided. Research focusing on pre service teacher's reflective practice highlights written reflection as one that is widely used, and it appears within the findings to be continued by in service teachers, although in a different manner. Primarily due to reflection having become a more natural and rapid process; which Mortari (2012) found to also occur for pre service teachers towards the end of their training.

Within teacher training written reflection is encouraged through the use of reflective journals (Mortari, 2012). For the participating teachers their written reflection is now carried out in the form of their compulsory planning and assessment documents, and the marking of the pupils' books. These written documents can be seen as focusing on the pupils' development, rather than the teachers own practice, as they concentrate on identifying their pupils' achievements. Resulting in the documents not containing any of the necessary reflective dialogue, such as the teacher's thoughts and experiences, which Ghaye and Ghaye (1998) state is required within written reflection for future development to occur. Therefore questioning whether these documents can be viewed as written types of reflection, which effectively assist in professional development. However, as pointed out by Ghaye (2011) reflective writing should involve attempts at understanding aspects of one's own teaching practice. Through these documents the teachers are able to identify the achievements of their pupils, which in turn enables them to reflect on their own practice; thereby turning the documents into both an appropriate type of written reflection and a useful object of reflection.

As a consequence of the participant's social and written types of reflection, reflection on-practice takes place; which in turn becomes viewed as a continuous type of reflection, rather than a separate type. This was identified as being a consequence of the participants teaching and reflective experience, which Mortari (2012) supports through his findings. Due to the teacher's lack of acknowledgment of this reflective process, it would be possible to question their overall awareness of it, in relation to their own teaching practice. However, they do ensure their pupils partake in this reflective process, so it could be suggested that they are both aware of this type of reflection, and the benefits that it can bring to personal development.

Experience is regarded as being a key factor in affecting the level of one's reflective capability and their reflective methods (Griggs, 2011; Ottesen, 2007). Many of the in service teachers felt their reflective practice has become easier, due to their experience making reflection a more natural and unconscious process; rather than reflection being a separate aspect of their teaching practice. With experience acting as an object that affects their reflective practice, it

appeared, many of the teachers no longer went into as much detail when reflecting, compared to when they were training. Therefore questioning once again whether their reflective practice is in depth enough for critical reflection to occur; a process Ghaye and Ghaye (1998) believe is necessary for positive developmental change.

As a result of the participants constantly viewing their reflective practice as an unconscious and continuous process, it became apparent that many were unaware they were actually carrying out reflection in-action. Due to this we can agree with Convery (2006) that this proposed type of reflection is void of meaning within the participants teaching practice. As Convery (2006) states this term encompasses the majority of an in service teachers reflective practice, and is therefore too broad to be a separate reflective process. However according to researchers (Ghaye and Ghaye, 1998; Ghaye, 2011), reflection in-action requires the practitioner to remain in a constantly reflective approach; which can lead to the process of reflection in-action becoming an unconscious behaviour. Showing how continuous and in-action reflection are intertwining processes, whilst still being separate reflective processes as shown within the results.

It becomes clear through the results and the literature that many types of reflection intertwine, and their affect on professional development is dependent upon the objects that the reflection is focused upon. It appears that the nature of the participants teaching life and the way in which they discuss their use of reflection, causes many of the reflective terms produced within the literature to become irrelevant for their teaching practice. Instead the participants have moulded their reflective methods to suit their individual needs and to fit into their busy teaching schedule, rather than sticking to the rigid processes proposed by the literature.

Despite the various types of reflection and the objects that affect the reflective processes, the findings show that the majority of the teachers' reflection is aimed at developing their own teaching practice. This supports the literature, whereby professional development is considered to be the sole purpose of reflection (Birmingham, 2004). However the findings do point out an additional focal point for the teacher's reflective practice, with Martin declaring: 'It's for our

own teaching and for the children'. Therefore the reflective practice of the participating teachers is concerned with both the development of their pupils, and their own teaching practice.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

Conclusion

6.0 Introduction

This section summarises the main findings of the study in relation to the over arching aim, to investigate the reflective practice of primary school teachers. The strengths and limitations of the study are also identified in order to strengthen future investigations of this nature. Finally, future avenues for research in this area of study are identified and briefly discussed.

The findings from the study depicted a number of reflective methods that the in service teachers carried out within their profession. Social reflection appeared to be the most commonly used and most appropriate type for their busy schedule. Both Pedro (2011) and Mortari (2012) recognised that teachers lack the necessary time for reflection, which can be quite a time consuming activity. The teachers are able to carry out social forms of reflection easily and quickly, during their breaks and in passing, in the forms of brief conversations. Despite this written reflection became compulsory, in the form of planning and assessment documents. The participants discussed this type of reflection with mixed opinion over its effect on both pupil and professional development; primarily due to the workload it created and the time it required.

It was apparent within the results that teacher training assisted in the development of the participants teaching ability, although the process was not a true reflection of the professional world of teaching. For instance the teachers discussed a number of tasks that they are required to carry out as part of their profession, which did not appear in the previous research concerning trainee teachers' reflective practice. Many of these tasks became viewed as objects that assisted the reflective practice of the in service teachers, such as the pupils and the teachers past experiences; which appeared to affect both the manner and depth of their reflection. Ottesen (2007) recognised that in service teachers have the opportunity to 'share the resources and enterprises that mediate their teaching practice' (p.41). All of which further assist the teacher's reflective practice and in turn enable it to become a simpler task (Mortari, 2012). Allowing them as Alger (2006) explains to handle the copious amount of tasks required of them, and to adopt the most effective type of reflection to enhance their teaching practice.

The teachers discussed clearly how they felt their experience became an extra object that affected their reflective practice, enabling them to carry out their tasks more efficiently, such as lesson planning and marking; thereby enabling more time for reflection to occur within their busy schedule. This is fitting with Pedro's (2011) findings where he concluded that time and teaching experience are key to enabling a teacher to be a successful reflective practitioner. With the benefit of their experience the participants felt that reflection was no longer a separate task that needed undertaking. Instead reflection had become an imbedded process within their teaching practice, whereby it gets carried out both naturally and continuously. These findings show how the in service teachers understand and support the notion put forward by Birmingham (2004) that reflective practice is and should be embedded within teaching.

The findings correlate with Dewey's (1933) concept of reflection as being a skill where hindsight is critically used to analyse tasks, whilst also looking forward to enable future development. However, the discussions concerning their experience simplifying their reflective processes, and their relaxed approach to certain types of reflection, such as informal social reflective conversations, allow questions to arise concerning the critical aspect of the participants reflective practice; which Dewey (1993) deems to be a necessary component of reflection. It could be suggested that certain aspects of their reflective practice will be lacking the depth that Ghaye and Ghaye (1998) state is required for critical reflection to arise; which is essential for professional development to occur. Teaching is regarded as a profession that requires constant adaption and development (Ghaye and Ghaye, 1998; Ghaye, 2011; Pearson, 2012) in order to cope with the varying pupil needs and ever changing national curriculum (Jamieson, 1994; Harvard and Hodkinson, 1994). As both Alger (2006) and Pearson (2012), point out reflection should be concerned with developing teaching practice and pupil experience; which the participants recognised within their discussions. Due to this, researchers (Brookfield, 1995; Larrivee, 2000; Moon, 2006).recommend that teachers ensure critical reflection is incorporated within their reflective practice, as it is regarded to be a fundamental component for enabling teachers to cope with changes in their profession.

6.1 Strengths, Weaknesses and Limitations

The qualitative nature of this investigation and its use of focus groups, allowed an in depth collection of data to be obtained. The focus groups as Basit (2010) points out, allowed data to be collected that contained both supporting and opposing points of view, concerning the same topic of discussion. The generally small size of the focus groups and the use of open ended questions allowed each of the participants to effectively put across their point of view. The use of these questions within the focus groups created the desired conversational flow, which lead to a more in depth collection of data (Denzin, 1970; Yin, 2003; Basit, 2010).

The investigation was not without its weaknesses however, which appeared when analysing the data in relation to investigations aims. From the findings, it is apparent that there was a need to delve further into the reflective thought processes of the participants; particularly concerning their critical approach to their teaching practice. If this had occurred then the findings and the critical aspect of the teacher's reflective practice might not be under so much scrutiny, and a more definitive conclusion could have been obtained, as to how critical the teachers are as reflective practitioners.

This investigation was limited to primary school teacher's use and views of reflection within their teaching practice. This was however, primarily due to the time constraint put upon the investigation, but also the access the investigator had to schools within her area. The nature of teaching within secondary schools is different to that within primary schools, so it could be suggested that their reflective practice might also differ. Extending the investigation to involve in service teachers within secondary schools may have provided further insight into the reflective practice of in service teachers.

6.2 Future Research

There is a clear indication of a need for further research to be conducted with regards to in service teachers' use of reflection. The results highlight alterations and possible new definitions of the types of reflection appropriate for the teaching profession; whilst also showing how objects of reflection are a key determinant to the extent and type of reflection adopted. Literature fails to adequately discuss how objects of reflection, such as pupils and teaching experience, can affect the depth and nature of the reflective processes adopted by in service teachers. Therefore, further research into the reflective practice of in service teachers could assist in the development of appropriate reflective techniques during teacher training, and allow the teaching profession to further develop.

There is also a question over the depth of critical reflection within the participating in service teacher's reflective practice. It could therefore be recommended that further research should be conducted, into the critical aspects of in service teachers' reflective processes. As Gibbs (1988) points out, for reflection to have any positive consequence the reflective practitioner must be able to view and investigate their profession critically. Therefore, further research into this aspect of in service teachers reflective processes, could help determine the effect that the participating teacher's reflective practice is having upon their own teaching practice; whilst also informing other in service teachers of the benefits that incorporating critical reflection into their reflective practice can have upon their teaching practice.

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APPENDICE

Appendix A

Letter sent to participating schools

Miss B. E. Denley

Carnbrea

Lon Slwch

Brecon, Powys

LD3 7RL

Date:- 19-10-2012

Dear, Head teacher,

I am writing to enquire whether the teachers within your school would be willing to participate in a group interview, in order to help with the research for my current dissertation proposal for my university course.

I am currently in my final year of studying Sport Development at Cardiff Metropolitan (previously known as UWIC). I am from Brecon and am currently planning on following a career in primary teaching. This is the main reason behind the focus of my current dissertation.

My dissertation is on 'the reflective practice of primary school teachers'. To complete this study I am looking for 6 schools within the local area to complete some small group interviews within this current school term. For each interview I will require 3-4 teachers, dependent on the amount of teachers within the school. Each interview will last for around 30-45 minutes maximum and I would conduct them at times most convenient for you. The questioning is very basic and will not require any personal details, the amount of information the participants supply me within the interview is entirely up to them.

Those that were to participate within the interviews would remain anonymous within the publication of my dissertation and any responses that they

give will be kept confidential. To ensure all of this, I have confidentiality forms that each participant would have to sign before participating.

I hope the outcome of my study will be to provide some helpful information to the curriculum planners of PGCE courses. Therefore I hope you will think positively about taking part in my study. If you have any further questions I will be happy to answer them, my details are below; however I shall ring in the next few days to ensure you have received my letter and to hear your response.

Yours Sincerely

Bethan Denley

E-mail: bethandenley@sky.com

Mobile: 07429125830

Appendix B

Consent form for participants

**CARDIFF METROPOLITAN
INFORMED CONSENT FORM**

CSS Reference No:

Title of Project: The Reflective Practice of Primary School Teachers

Name of Researcher: Bethan Denley

Participant to complete this section: Please initial each box.

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet dated for this evaluation study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that it is possible to stop taking part at any time, without giving a reason.
3. I also understand that if this happens, our relationships with the Cardiff Metropolitan University, or our legal rights will not be affected
4. I understand that information from the study may be used for reporting purposes, but I will not be identified.
5. I agree to take part in this study on Reflective Practice within Primary Schools

<input type="checkbox"/>

Name of Participant

Signature of Participant

Date

Name of person taking consent

Date

Signature of person taking consent

* When completed, one copy for participant and one copy for researcher's files.

Appendix C

Original Interview Guide

Introductory Questions

1. Names, teaching year group.
2. Length of time at current school.
3. Taught at other schools? If so – remember for the later questions.
4. Length of time teaching.

Concept of Reflection

1. What do you think of when I say the word reflection?
2. Do you use it in your teaching day? If so do you find it useful? If not, any main reasons why?

Use of Reflection

1. What ways do you use to reflect? Do the methods differ for different situations? EXAMPLES.
2. What guides your thoughts and decisions? - Textbooks, political targets – restraining? School culture - If teachers taught at other schools – were their reflective methods different there, if so why?
3. Have your methods or the amount of time you spend reflecting changed over time? If so, why? How?
4. What is the best time for reflection for you? Do you feel there is enough time for reflective thoughts?

Reflection in PGCE's

1. Was the use of reflection used during your teacher training?
Yes -
2. What methods were focused on?

3. Do you remember what your views were on the use of reflection in teaching then? Have they changed?
4. Do you feel the focus was helpful for preparing you for the real world of teaching? NO – Why? Methods, focus of course.

NO

1. Do you think it would have helped you prepare better for teaching if it had been?
2. What would be the benefits?

Closing Questions

1. Do you feel through your use of reflection it has developed you professionally and personal? – If so – How?
2. Any closing remarks on your use of reflection that I may have missed out on?

Appendix D

Reviewed Interview Guide

Introductory Questions

1. Names, teaching year group.
2. Length of time at current school.
3. Taught at other schools? If so – remember for the later questions.
4. Length of time teaching.

Concept of Reflection

1. When I say the term reflection what do you think of, in relation to your teaching?
2. Do you use it in your teaching day? If so do you find it useful? If not, any main reasons why?

Use of Reflection

1. What ways do you use to reflect? Do the methods differ for different situations? EXAMPLES.
2. What guides your thoughts and decisions? - Textbooks, political targets – restraining? School culture - If teachers taught at other schools – were their reflective methods different there, if so why?
3. Have your methods or the amount of time you spend reflecting changed over time? If so, why? How?
4. What is the best time for reflection for you? Do you feel there is enough time for reflective thoughts?

Reflection in PGCE's

1. Was the use of reflection used during your teacher training?
 - a. Yes -
2. What methods were focused on?

3. Do you remember what your views were on the use of reflection in teaching then? Have they changed?
4. Do you feel the focus was helpful for preparing you for the real world of teaching? NO – Why? Methods, focus of course.

NO

1. Do you think it would have helped you prepare better for teaching if it had been?
2. What would be the benefits?

Closing Questions

1. Do you feel through your use of reflection it has developed you professionally and personal? – If so – How?
2. Any closing remarks on your use of reflection that I may have missed out on?