



Becoming a Critically Reflective Teacher

Stephen D. Brookfield

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1996 Winner of the Cyril O. Houle World Award for Literature in Adult Education

-[Brookfield] gently demystifies critically reflective learning and teaching with dozens of practical examples from the classroom in different scholarly fields. Lucid, wise, jargon-free, personal and fluently written. Required reading for educators of adults everywhere and for all faculty development programs.-
-- Jack Mezirow, emeritus professor of adult education, Teachers College, Columbia University

Building on the insights of his highly acclaimed earlier work, *The Skillful Teacher*, and applying the principles of adult learning, Brookfield thoughtfully guides teachers through the processes of becoming critically reflective about teaching, confronting the contradictions involved in creating democratic classrooms, and using critical reflection as a tool for ongoing personal and professional development.

Becoming a Critically Reflective Teacher Details

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From Reader Review Becoming a Critically Reflective Teacher for online ebook

Abby says

I'm generally pretty liberal about race-related stuff, so no, my beef with this book is not that it's "too liberal." My beef is that this is the kind of white liberal guilt/white savior complex, wrapped up in a hearty portion of "I need my students to like me!!," that makes me want to hit my head against a wall. I'm reading this with a group of other English Comp instructors, and while I appreciate the practical discussion suggestions, I'm additionally at a loss as to how I can practically incorporate Brookfield's exercises, since they seem to be geared mainly towards "let's talk about the patriarchy!"-type discussions and not "let's talk about writing topic sentences!"

I wanted this to be good... really, I did... but I think Friere is still the classic, and truthfully more useful, text on the subject.

Jenny (Reading Envy) says

I am in the Reflection Fellows program where I work, and we are discussing this book next week. I thought it was good, focusing on various of reflecting on your teaching, and then dealing with the ramifications of those reflections (which can lead to imposter syndrome, for instance.) I liked reading about how he dealt with confronting his own assumptions in particular.

Cigdem says

I started the book very positively, and enjoyed the conversational tone it was written. What I liked about the book was the anecdotal parts - I do learn by example, so those examples were much more valuable than any sort of advice. However, towards the end, there is less of that and more on advice, theory, and a good deal of warnings of what might face the teachers who want to practice critical reflection. Based on such warnings, there are two possibilities: either I did not understand how to become critically reflective or I do not see why it could be so dangerous... At the end, it might be my naiveté as a new teacher. Finally, there is one chapter where Mr. Brookfield talks about how he learned swimming - this is the most insightful chapter of all, and just for this part, it is worth reading.

Heather Edick says

Excellent book full of great ideas for teachers.

Kyle says

Took two courses with Dr. Brookfield and this is the Bible for teaching critical theory. Loved it and enjoyed studying with the master.

Shawn Bird says

This was an assigned text for my Masters in Curriculum. Reading chapters was generally a chore. Avoid if you're reading curriculum books for entertainment.

Jill says

I just began this for a reading group of former Teaching Scholars on my campus as a way for us to continue to keep in touch with one another and the SoTL literature. Although I haven't made it very far into the text, I am already questioning some of my practices and deeply held assumptions, and I am someone who regularly subjects my courses to critical review. I'll try to post a more thorough review once I'm finished with it.

Jared says

Do you want the good news first or the bad news? Ok here's the bad news. The author does not explain how a teacher would be "critically reflective" and still teach his subject matter. He has all of this stuff about critical reflection and at the end of the day I just want to know when the students would ever be taught stuff. He also has disregard for traditional learning models (like the lecture) and is convinced that the democratic model of dialogue, learning journals, and making sure that minorities (racial, and gender emphasized) do not feel left out. On top of that he sometimes adopts a sniveling attitude where he berates himself about his mistakes (he is trying to model openness but I think it sounds sniveling). This guy suffers from "liberal white man" guilt. And in a bad way. My biggest complaint is that all of the stuff he recommends is just not realistic. There is no way any teacher could do all of these things or should do all of the things he suggests. Throughout the book I rolled my eyes and smirked at the author many times.

Here is the good news. 1. He does a fairly adequate job explaining what critical reflection is. 2. Even if a teacher disagreed with his fundamental ideas many of his methods would be useful. 3. Not all of these need to be done. Anyone with common sense will mix and match them. 4. He claims his book is for adult education but many of his ideas apply to other fields. 5. His writing is easy to understand, and he does not go out of the way to sound smarter than he really is.

I bought this book because I want to teach in South Korea, and I got it at discount price. I am not an experienced teacher, but could tell that doing his whole system probably would not work. But doing bits of his system at different times will probably help reveal faulty assumptions, and bad practices that need to be improved. That is itself makes this book reading.

However you will have to put up with much silliness to get to the treasure.

Jenna says

The author had some interesting ideas, I found his main points useful, and even though I don't always see how in reality it would be feasible to do CIQs every week, it certainly gave me new ideas. His excerpts from actual experiences help ground his ideas/suggestions for me.

Wendy says

Practical ways to be more reflective in a teaching role. If it seems a bit dry at the beginning keep going.

Kristin says

I'm not sure I'm going to like this one, but I bet it's going to be good for me! I'm not accustomed to thinking of power dynamics or assumptions that may get in the way of my effectiveness as a teacher. If persist and I work hard, I may be able to help others too. I hope to be able to connect it to What Our Stories Teach Us and some of MaryEllen Weimer's work to help create a new article type for our teaching journal!

Zack says

2.5 (last couple of chapters were nice)

Julianne says

This is the book I use when creating student assessments--self-evaluations, clinical evals, reflection pieces, end of semester assessments. For anyone trying to get people to really look at what they're doing, learning, and where they need to go with their education.

Vincent Darlage says

Very insightful volume.

Katya Kitchingman says

I'm frustrated by the nature of a negative review I've just read about this book and feel I have to stick up for it. Certainly there is little discussion surrounding more 'traditional' teaching methods like the lecture- this would be because the author wishes to remove traditional lecturer-student power hierarchies. Another criticism was that if the lecturer is concentrating on equality and diversity and other aspects of critical

pedagogy then how can there possibly be time to deliver the specialist content. Firstly- critically reflective practice is entrenched in practice rather than an add on to be used here and there. Secondly, the review in general seems to have a respect for classical humanist teaching where teacher-centric content is respected rather than questioned. We don't pour knowledge into students, they aren't empty receptacles waiting for our wisdom. It's our job to activate their wisdom. Rote learning is certainly something our children have to suffer in the current school system- adult learning is not so and shouldn't be so (I wouldn't teach if it was). I found this book inspirational- a tool for our own critical reflection but also, perhaps more importantly, a tool for critical thinking skills in our students - let's not forget that education should challenge the status quo, should be progressive in outlook- well that's what this brilliant book does!
