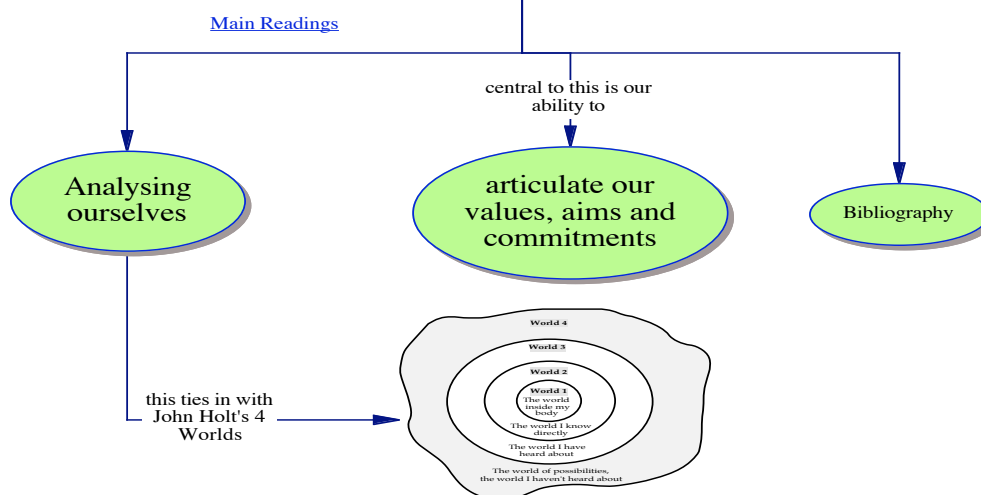


# Knowing ourselves as teachers



## Knowing ourselves as teachers- from [www.rtweb.info](http://www.rtweb.info)

Review by Rob Clarke, MA in Education Feb 2004

This article delves into the idea that knowing oneself as a teacher will enable us to become more reflective and therefore more effective. It looks at three main issues relating to this: the qualities of teachers as individuals; our strengths and weaknesses as teachers; and the values and commitments we hold. The central premise of this article is that teachers must themselves be effective learners and they are empowered to do this by a culture within their workplace that supports them to evaluate and consider their values and practices deeply- in a trusting and 'learning community'. One of the ideas that I made connections with in this article was the notion that 'we can't improve ourselves as teachers without improving ourselves as humans' and therefore develop the effectiveness of our teaching. It also ties in with my belief that one cannot be an effective teacher without being an effective person.

### Analysing ourselves

The authors state that "most people enter the teaching profession with a strong sense of personal identity and of personal value (p91)." They go further to discuss a model which allows us to analyse these values and beliefs which is designed about four key aspects of the self:

1. *Our public display*- the aspects of ourselves we display to the world.
2. *Our blind spots*- the aspects of ourselves that we do not see but are obvious to others.
3. *Our dreamer spots*- the aspects of ourselves that we know are there, or would like to develop, yet are unknown by the outside world.
4. *Our untapped reservoir*- this is our potential, of which we are unaware.

The authors suggest an activity to help us analyse our four 'spots', which I am unsure of. I wonder if it would be better to do this activity with more than just one person who knows us rather than just by ourselves? I wonder if this would offer an interesting/useful research possibility? This is really interesting as it ties in with a model I have come across called 'John Holt's Four Worlds', which deals with the worlds we live in:

*World One is the world inside my skin, World Two is what I might call "My World", the world I have been in and know, the worlds of my mental model. World Three is something different. . . . It is the world I know of, or know something about, but do not know, have not seen or experienced. It has in it all the places I have heard about, but not been to; all the people I have heard about, but not known; all the things I know men have done, and that I might do, but have not done. It is the world of the possible. World Four is made up of all those things or possibilities that I have not heard of or even imagined (Holt: 1971:20)."*

### Articulate our values, aims and commitments

Our perspectives and viewpoints influence what we do inside and outside the classroom. How do we measure our values and viewpoints as manifested through our behaviours? What about that of others? How do we help both ourselves and others to see this? The authors relate this to a range of word views or labels of thinking about education that on the surface are quite trite and boring if you ask me! However it would be interesting to devise a measurement tool, which could tap into these. The authors finish with a reflective activity to help us identify and examine our values positions and our perceptions of pupils which I think could be extremely useful and interesting.

### Bibliography

Holt, J. (1971). *What am I Doing Monday*. not sure of the full reference