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Supporting presence in teacher education: The connection between the personal and professional aspects of teaching

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ABSTRACT

This study follows one individual student teacher during a period of one single school year in which she was supported in developing 'presence' while teaching. The notion of 'presence' was formulated by the teacher herself, and coincides with the growing interest in this aspect in psychology, and in theories about becoming a teacher. In her supervision, the so-called core reflection approach was used, which strongly builds on the concept of presence and on positive psychology. Based on analyses of audio taped supervisory sessions, six stages were identified in the teacher's development. These stages are described and related to theories about positive psychology and core reflection. The supervisor's interventions leading to the transitions between the stages were identified, analysed, and related to key principles of core reflection. It appeared that the teacher's growth not only led to experiencing 'presence' while teaching, but also to a greater use of her personal qualities. Taken together, it appeared that after the supervision the teacher was much more 'in flow', and that she was more effective as a teacher. In this article, both the teacher's growth and the supervisor's interventions are described in detail, and illustrated using quotations from supervisory sessions, logbooks, and interviews. A case is made for connecting professional and personal aspects in supervising student teachers.

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1. Introduction

Jeff, a 24 year old student teacher, experiences severe disciplinary problems in his classroom. When in front of the classroom explaining or giving an assignment, the pupils do not seem to take him very seriously, and in turn Jeff does not seem to take that seriously enough. The mentor teacher has already noticed that Jeff does not seem to really make contact with the pupils. Both his mentor and the university supervisor stimulated Jeff to reflect on his classroom behaviour, but this has not really led to improvement. The mentor teacher has also given tips such as: start short conversations with individual pupils before and after the lesson; walk into the classroom while teaching and make eye-contact. However, when Jeff applied these 'tricks', as he called them, he felt awkward and the pupils also seemed to feel that Jeff's behaviour was somewhat artificial. So everything seemed to fail. A basic problem as formulated by the mentor teacher was that when Jeff was teaching, one could not sense the presence of someone naturally demanding your attention.

Most teacher educators will recognize this example. Noddings (2003) emphasizes that teachers need to have 'total encounters'

with pupils in order to have an educational impact. Jeff seems to fail in this respect. How to deal with such a case in teacher education? Should Jeff develop more teaching competencies and practice them? Or is this more a matter of personal growth? Building on Noddings's view, the core of the problem might be Jeff's lack of *presence* while teaching. We will further elaborate this concept in this article, as well as an approach to dealing with cases in which there is insufficient *presence* in a teacher. This is called the core reflection approach. In a case study, we analysed the processes and outcomes when this approach was used in the supervision of a teacher. This particular teacher also felt a problem with being fully present in the classroom, although without serious disciplinary problems. We think that her development, although unique, provides many aspects that will be recognized by other supervisors or mentors, for many student teachers have to deal with this issue of 'presence', often discussed in terms of 'being yourself while teaching'.

2. Theoretical framework

2.1. Technical competence versus personal growth

The question of whether in teacher development the emphasis should be on technical competence or on personal growth has been the object of continuous debate in teacher education. Around 1970,

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this tension became very apparent through the distinction between competency-based teacher education (CBTE) and humanistic based teacher education (HBTE) (see e.g. Joyce, 1975). The aim underlying CBTE was the formulation of concrete and observable criteria of good teaching, which could serve as a basis for the training of teachers. For quite a time, process-product studies, in which relationships were analysed between concrete teacher behaviour and pupils' learning outcomes, were considered the type of research that could feed this approach to teacher education. From this research, long lists of trainable skills were derived and became the basis of teacher education programmes. This elicited much criticism from people who found this approach too technical and considered the personal aspect of teaching as crucial (e.g. Combs, Blume, Newman, & Wass, 1974). Alternatively, HBTE tried to promote student teachers' reflection on such questions as 'who am I?', 'what kind of a teacher do I want to be?', and 'how do I see my role as a teacher?', with the aim of developing a professional identity (Combs et al., 1974; Joyce, 1975).

To date, the same type of discussion is still going on. There is a renewed interest in standardization and the grounding of teacher education in unambiguously formulated competencies, reflected, for example, in the evidence-based practice movement (e.g. Hammersley, 2007), and we also see much criticism from people advocating a more personal perspective to teacher development. For example, Allender (2001), Bullough (1997), Kelchtermans and Vandenberghe (1994), and Loughran (2006) have all emphasized the personal element in teaching, and the importance of learning to know oneself better as a prerequisite to being a good teacher. McLean (1999) concludes that after decades in which 'the person' was largely absent from the theory on how best to educate teachers, we have witnessed a surge of interest in the question of how beginning teachers think about themselves, and how they cope with the substantial personal transformations they pass through in the process of becoming teachers.

In our view, the ongoing debate about personal growth versus developing competencies creates too much of a contrast, whereas we believe that there are strengths in both perspectives. This has led us to develop an approach to supporting teacher development which combines both sides of the coin. In expanding this approach, the primary question was how teacher education can support people in developing the necessary teaching competencies *in line with* who they are and what motivates them to become a teacher. This means that we agree with Scharmer (2007) and Senge, Scharmer, Jaworski, and Flowers (2004) who state that high quality performance implies more than simply 'choosing' a standard type of behaviour matching a specific type of teaching situation (cf. Fig. 1). As Schön (1987) argues, practitioners often unconsciously develop such standard solutions to situations, generally based on what worked well in the past.

Scharmer (2007) and Senge et al. (2004) argue that such a frozen form of behaviour is often ineffective and they state that finding professional behaviour of high quality requires a process that they describe with a so-called 'U' (see Fig. 2 for an adaptation of their model to the area of teaching).

At the bottom of the U, the practitioner makes contact with a state of being that Senge et al. call 'presence'. In the next section, we will further elaborate this concept, which will clarify that their view goes beyond a mere shift from a behavioural towards a cognitive view. We will also connect the concept of presence to a new approach to the supervision of student teachers developed in

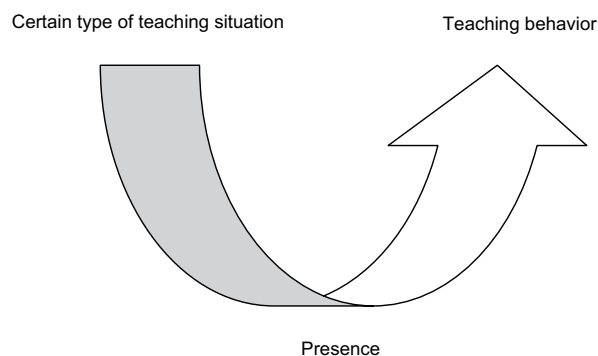


Fig. 2. Deep learning according to the U-theory.

the Netherlands. This approach aims at connecting the personal and professional aspects of teaching, and at using this connection to arrive at a unique and adequate response to the demands of a situation. In other words, it supports the movement through the U. The kind of reflection promoted by this approach is called *core reflection*. In previous publications, we have described the underlying theoretical framework (Korthagen, 2004, 2005) as well as the details of the supervisory strategies for promoting core reflection (Korthagen & Vasalos, 2005). The framework and the general principles underlying the supervisory strategies will be summarized in the next section.

The remainder of this article describes a study aimed at an in-depth analysis of the learning process of a teacher supervised using this approach, and we will present a detailed description of the supervisory interventions that promoted important transitions in her development. This study shows how the teacher starts integrating her capacity for *presence* or, in her own words, develops a sense of "being-while-teaching" during her lessons, which strengthens the development of her professional behaviour. The aim of this article is to illustrate how this kind of supervision bridges the gap between the more professionally and the more personally oriented perspectives on teacher development.

2.2. Presence

Rodgers and Raider-Roth (2006) drew on various sources when elaborating the concept of presence within the context of teaching. They offer the following definition:

Presence from the teacher's point of view is the experience of bringing one's whole self to full attention so as to perceive what is happening in the moment (p. 267).

Greene (1973, p. 162) called it 'wide-awakeness'. Presence is related to the concept of mindfulness (Brown & Ryan, 2003; Germer, Siegel, & Fulton, 2005) and to what in Buddhist traditions is called "full awareness" (see e.g. Mingyur Rinpoche, 2007, p. 94). Senge et al. (2004) elaborated the concept as a basis for what they call "exploring profound change in people, organizations and society" (the subtitle of their book). They explain that presence is more than simply being in the here-and-now. It implies "a fundamental shift in the relationship between seer and seen":

When the subject-object duality that is basic to our habitual awareness begins to dissolve, we shift from looking "out at the world" from the viewpoint of a detached observer to looking from "inside" what is being observed. Learning to see begins when we stop projecting our habitual assumptions and start to see really freshly. It continues when we can see our connection to that reality more clearly (p. 41).

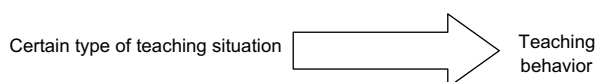


Fig. 1. Superficial professionalism.

Noddings (2003) states about herself as a teacher: “What I must do is to be totally and non-selectively present to the student – to each student – as he addresses me.” (p. 180). As Rodgers and Raider-Roth (p. 271) show, a key aspect of presence is *being present to oneself*. Here the interesting point is that contact with the outside world is enhanced because of a deeper awareness of the self (Almaas, 1986; Senge et al., 2004). This is where the connection between the professional and the personal element in teaching takes place. Such a connection is important, since many authors emphasize that a strong divide between the personal and the professional may lead to an ineffective friction in a teacher's professional identity (Beijaard, Meijer, & Verloop, 2004; Nias, 1989). According to Palmer (2004, p. 186), it is essential for teachers to “live divided no more”. He states that “good teaching cannot be reduced to technique; good teaching comes from the identity and integrity of the teacher” (Palmer, 1998, p. 10). Rodgers and Raider-Roth (2006) elaborate on this and note that ‘integrity’ here means an integration of the self and the subsequent strengths that result.

2.3. Positive psychology

The idea to connect the person and the profession in order to bring out the best in people, also builds on a fairly recent approach within clinical psychology, called *positive psychology*. The development of people's personal strengths is a key principle in this approach. The founders of positive psychology, Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi, state that it is a reaction to the fact that for long psychology had focused on pathology, weakness and damage done to people, and hence on ‘treatments’. They emphasize that “treatment is not just fixing what is broken; it is nurturing what is best” (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000, p. 7). Hence, they point towards the importance of personal strengths such as creativity, courage, perseverance, kindness, and fairness (Peterson, 2006; Seligman, 2002). Following Ofman (2000), we call such strengths *core qualities*. Almaas (1986, p. 148) states that such qualities cannot be further reduced to something else, or analysed into simpler constituents.

A central focus in positive psychology is the idea that people can use their own personal qualities to optimally act in the world outside, so that their actions are both effective and personally fulfilling. Acting upon these qualities leads to what Csikszentmihalyi (1990) calls *flow*, a concept that comes remarkably close to the concept of presence, as Csikszentmihalyi describes it as a state of totally being in the here-and-now, optimally connecting the demands of the situation with one's inner capacities.

Since 2000, many empirical studies within positive psychology have shown impressive outcomes of this new approach. For example, Seligman, Steen, Park, and Peterson (2005) demonstrated significant long-term effects on their well-being of paying attention to people's strengths. Fredrickson (2002) looked at the effects on people's cognitive development of a focus on strengths, as opposed to a focus on their deficiencies and problems. She states that the first promotes positive and the latter negative feelings, and demonstrated that this makes a great difference to people's cognitive capacities in the here-and-now. Negative feelings appear to narrow a person's momentary thought-action repertoire, as they elicit a need for action, calling to mind and body a deeply ingrained, ‘old’ adaptive action repertoire, which narrows the person's options in the here-and-now. As positive feelings do not elicit a need for quick action, they stimulate a broadening of the person's thought-action repertoire, which in turn leads to an increase in the use of personal resources and creativity. Hence, according to Fredrickson's *broaden-and-build model*, it is important to promote people's awareness of positive significances (see also Fredrickson & Losada, 2005).

2.4. Core reflection

The theory on presence and the principles of positive psychology form the basis of the so-called core reflection approach. This approach not only aims at incorporating the self and its strengths into teaching, but also at an optimal matching with the demands of the specific situation. This means that the full awareness of the here-and-now, which is what presence is all about, encompasses and connects both the teacher's self – and his or her core qualities –, and the environment. In the example of Jeff, this means that he would be able to be aware of his own core qualities and at the same time of what is happening in the pupils, and that he can use his core qualities to establish a relational connection with the pupils. The idea of using his core qualities as the basis of his professional development is typical of the broaden-and-build model.

The starting point of the core reflection approach is the assumption that professional behaviour becomes more effective and also more fulfilling if connected with the deeper layers within a person. In the *onion model* (Korthagen, 2004; see Fig. 3), six of such layers are distinguished, based on an earlier model of Dilts (1990): (1) environment, (2) behaviour, (3) competencies, (4) beliefs, (5) identity, and (6) personal mission (sometimes referred to as the layer of spirituality). Fig. 3 also shows the questions that are related to each of the six layers.

Going through the ‘U’ of Fig. 2 corresponds to an inward movement into the onion, that is, from the outer to the more inner layers, where the person's core qualities are located. This is then followed by an outward movement in the onion (corresponding with an upward movement in the U), which means that the person's behaviour in the professional situation builds on his or her awareness of self (identity), sense of mission (ideals, calling, inspiration), and connection with core qualities, as well as on an awareness of the possibilities and the demands of the situation. This implies that the U-movement corresponds to a movement of attention in which one gets more in touch with one's inner strengths and with the environment. The aim of core reflection is to promote alignment between the onion layers, which means that the behaviour represents a harmonious connection between the ‘inside’ (the inner layers) and the ‘outside’ (the environment). This implies that the behaviour is both an effective response to the demands of the situation and personally fulfilling.

The ideas underlying core reflection concur with the essence of the ‘U-theory’ and positive psychology, in the sense that the process in which the connection with the ‘inside’ is made, adds an important aspect to technically adequate behaviour. For example, when a teacher interacts with a class by asking questions, building on the answers, eliciting questions from the pupils, etcetera, the interaction

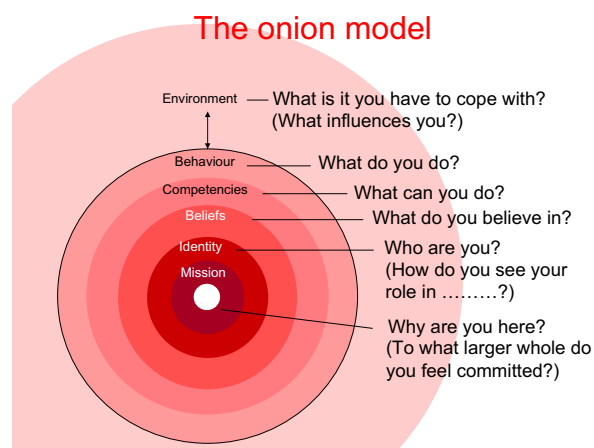


Fig. 3. The onion model (adapted from Korthagen, 2004).

has a deeper impact if the teacher's behaviour is fed by core qualities such as care, enthusiasm, curiosity, and goal-directedness.

2.5. Promoting core reflection in the supervision of teachers

How can this goal be achieved in the supervision of teachers? The core reflection approach is based on the following key principles (Korthagen & Vasalos, 2005):

1. Promoting awareness of ideals and core qualities in the person that are related to the situation reflected on, as a means of strengthening awareness of the layers of identity and mission.
2. Identifying internal obstacles to acting out these ideals and core qualities (i.e. promoting awareness of disharmony between the onion layers).
3. Promoting awareness of the cognitive, emotional and motivational aspects embedded in 1 and 2.
4. Promoting a state of presence in which the person is fully aware (cognitively and emotionally) of the discrepancy or friction between 1 and 2, and the self-created nature of the internal obstacles.
5. Trust in the process that takes place from within the person.
6. Support of acting out one's inner potential within the situation under reflection.
7. Promoting autonomy in using core reflection.

The focus on awareness of emotional and motivational aspects in addition to cognitive awareness (key principle 3) is characteristic of the core reflection approach, and is based on insights from neurobiology about the strong interrelations between cognition and emotion (e.g. Immordino-Yang & Damasio, 2007). As many supervisors know, mere cognitive insight into one's inner obstacles does in itself not always help much. We all know things that it would be good to do or to refrain from, but that does not mean that we translate this insight into effective behaviour. For example, a teacher who believes 'I can never deal with this class' needs more than a cognitive awareness of the constraining impact of this belief: she needs to really *feel* (physically) that because of this belief, she makes herself weak and vulnerable, so that on this basis she can develop the *will* to reconnect with her strengths (at the layer of identity and mission) and deconstruct the belief. This appears an effective way to promote a breakthrough towards 'alignment' (between the onion layers) in order to reconnect with the natural state of being that we have referred to with the term presence.

The core reflection approach to supervision, which Korthagen and Vasalos (2005) described in more detail, has been successfully implemented in a variety of Dutch schools, departments of teacher education, and other educational organizations. It is being applied to school principles, teachers, teacher educators, student teachers and pupils. Recently, workshops on core reflection have also been given in Australia, Great Britain and the US.

3. Research method

3.1. Aim, research questions and design

The incentive for the present study was the desire to arrive at an in-depth analysis of the way the core reflection approach to supervision works out in practice. We aimed at answering the following research questions:

1. What stages occur in a one-year process of a student teacher's professional development, guided by a supervisor promoting core reflection?
2. What supervisory strategies promote presence?

3. How does the connection between the personal and the professional aspects of teaching come about during the teacher's development?

We conducted a mixed-method case study of one female teacher's developmental process in the first year of secondary school teaching, and analysed (qualitatively) this process to determine the stages that subsequently evolved. We also analysed the supervisory strategies that guided the teacher in this process in order to understand their impact. Finally, we established the amount to which the teacher felt she could use her core qualities in teaching. In the description of the results, we will pay specific attention to describing the strategies identified in the core reflection approach as outlined in the previous section.

The teacher of this case study, Paulien, was followed during one school year, in which she taught social studies to three groups of 15- and 16-year-old pupils and was also involved in a teacher education programme. Paulien did have teaching experience in higher education, even in teacher education, but she had never before taught at the secondary level. During this period, Paulien had seven 1-h meetings with a supervisor (Angelo Vasalos, who is also one of the developers of the core reflection approach). This supervisor did not attend the lessons.

3.2. Data collection

We used the following instruments for data collection:

1. All supervisory meetings were audio taped and transcribed verbatim.
2. The teacher kept a log to record day-to-day events and reflections.
3. Around the middle (January) and near the end of the school year (May), a researcher not involved in the process held semi-structured interviews with both the supervisor and the teacher. The questions in these four interviews focused on two main categories: the teacher (learning process and learning results) and the supervisor (types of interventions and the overall supervisory process). Audio recordings of these interviews were transcribed verbatim.
4. At the beginning (October) and at the end of the year (June), the teacher filled in the Questionnaire on Core Qualities (QCQ) developed by Evelein (2005), based on the work of Ferrucci (1979), Korthagen (2004), Ofman (2000) and Tickle (1999). The QCQ contains three subscales, with core qualities in the areas of thinking (4 items), feeling (6 items), and wanting (3 items) respectively, to be scored on a seven-point Likert scale in order to indicate the degree to which the person has made use of the core qualities. Evelein reports reliability scores of .86 for the thinking scale, .80 for the feeling scale and .72 for the wanting scale. (See Table 1 for the 13 items.)

3.3. Data analysis

The data analysis started from the teacher's and supervisor's answers in the final interviews to the question of what to them was the essence of the teacher's development. From that, we worked backwards: from the transcripts of the supervision sessions or from her logbook, the teacher chose a number of instances that she saw as crucial in her developmental process and that had most contributed to what she in retrospect had described as the essence in her development as a teacher. She made this first selection, instead of a researcher, in order to have a direct *member check* (Merriam, 1998): otherwise it would have been possible for a researcher to choose instances that would not have been

experienced as such by the teacher, or would have left out instances that had been crucial to the teacher.

The teacher selected eleven fragments. Next, the supervisor analysed these and the parts immediately preceding and following them, and (a) wrote down his opinion on what happened to the teacher in these episodes (in terms of the theory on the process of core reflection) and (b) identified what supervisory strategies were related to this. The result, consisting of the eleven 'deep learning episodes' and the supervisor's comments on each of these, was discussed in a meeting between the researcher who had not been involved in the rest of the process, the supervisor, and the teacher. The goal of this meeting was to identify the distinct stages in the process of Paulien's development (research question 1), and the crucial interventions that brought about stage transitions (research question 2). The researcher served as a 'critical friend' (Day, 1999) in order to clarify the connection between the chosen fragments, the supervisor's comments, and the theoretical framework on core reflection. The procedure revealed a path of successive stages, which were labeled with the help of elements from the theory on core reflection. In Section 4, these stages will be described and illustrated with excerpts from the supervisory meetings, the journals, and the interviews. We will also illustrate how the strategies, identified as being essential to the core reflection approach, contributed to the teacher's development, especially to the teacher's growing presence.

Next, an analysis of the rest of the interviews and a comparison of the scores on the QCQ before and after the process helped to complement the picture. This will be discussed at the end of Section 4.

4. Findings

4.1. The essence of Paulien's development as a teacher

According to Paulien, the central issue in her development as a teacher was the fact that she learned to "feel herself" during teaching. In an e-mail at the end of the whole process, this 'feeling herself' seemed to have deepened further, and Paulien's description concurred with the ways in which authors writing on the issue of 'presence' phrase it. She wrote:

This sense of *being-while-teaching* was what I felt to be the most crucial aspect of my process of becoming a teacher.

In the closing interview, Angelo's answer to the question of the essence of the teacher's developmental process was in line with this, although it was stated in more theoretical terms:

She has made a big shift from someone who tried to avoid feeling her feelings towards someone who is more present, based on her growing confidence in feeling her feelings and, most of all, feeling *herself* (...). She is also much more in contact with the layer of mission, since she realizes the importance of focusing on her ideals and core values (...). In sum, I feel that there has been a significant development of professional identity.

We will now describe our findings concerning research questions 1 and 2 in connection with each other. We will do so by labeling the stages we distinguished in the teacher's development, and describe them using the theories described in previous sections. We will illustrate the stages using excerpts from the teacher's journal as well as transcripts of the supervision sessions. These transcripts also illustrate the interventions that brought about this development.

4.2. Stage 1: chaos and a fixation on problems

At the beginning of the process, it became clear that Paulien's major problem had to do not so much with the subject matter, or

the use of pedagogical approaches. In fact, she was rather flexible and creative in using instructional methods, and her pupils on the whole responded well. So she seemed to function fairly well in a professional sense. However, she had one major concern:

So many things happen. I don't know where to start, maybe with the things that happen, or maybe with the impact things have on me. What makes most sense? Sometimes I can separate them, sometimes I can't, I just don't know... [based on dissatisfaction with a specific lesson] I just can't seem to figure out the time things take in a lesson (always more than I had expected), and I just can't seem to focus on the essence of a lesson. It's too chaotic: in class as well as in my head (Journal, Oct. 7).

In the same journal entry, she also indicates what she feels would be her major task during the year she is facing:

I know I can do this [learning to be a teacher], if I just keep my mind to it. I think this is it: I have to learn "peace and quiet": be patient with my pupils, but specifically with *me*.

During the first supervisory meeting (Oct. 18), exploring the experiences Paulien encountered in her teaching, and reflecting together on the problems as well as on the successes, Angelo notices her tendency to ignore the value of successes and her personal part in these successes. This is illustrated by the following example, in which Paulien is talking about a lesson in which she successfully involved her pupils in an 'election game', and then reacts to Angelo's proposal to explore the reasons why the lesson was such a success:

Paulien: ... they had to form their own political parties and we went through all the phases of a genuine election. And because it IS election time at the moment, they were all involved, and wanted to know everything. And we laughed as well, I was the queen of course, so had to put my signature to the final coalition that had been formed, and also appoint the government ministers. It was fun!

Angelo: Yes, I can see that, you're still passionate about the lesson! What do you think, shall we examine what exactly made the lesson go well?

Paulien: Oh, but you know, but I still have so much to learn!... And I just don't seem to get a grip on all that is to be learned.

Angelo: ... I notice that at the moment I give you positive feedback. You do not seem to receive it, seems as if you do not really take it in. You seem to back away from it...

During the session, Angelo followed Fredrickson's (2002) strategy of broadening and building on qualities, which concurs with principle 1 of the core reflection approach (promoting an individual's awareness of his/her ideals and core qualities). This appears to lead to one of Paulien's crucial learning moments as it relates to her feeling of chaos: she appears to focus exclusively on the things that still have to be learned and sees them as being too much. It is this habit that seems to create the feeling of chaos. This is illustrated by the following fragment from the first supervisory meeting:

Angelo: I find it interesting to address your essential qualities or core qualities here: I see a lot of playfulness, excitement in you as you are talking about the pupils and how you stimulate them, and I see how you enjoy their motivation at that very moment. These are some of the qualities that I notice. And as we are talking about what exactly happens at that moment in that classroom, then I see you provoke humor in these pupils, that's an important core quality. I also see the quality of involvement: everybody is extremely involved in the task, the assignments you give them. So now I'm curious: what does it do to you to see these qualities in you and in your pupils? So, in the lesson you

give, you know how to evoke and activate these qualities, in yourself as well as in your pupils. [...]

Paulien: Well, yes, now you mention this, I knew of course, as I said earlier, that the lesson just went well, and I was thinking how can I hold on to this. And the fact that you now label this, I think, well, it seems to become a bit more tangible or understandable. [...] Apparently, I've done something that made it go that way, but what? I understand that a bit better now. It also reassures me a bit, apparently it's not a coincidence if it should happen again. Maybe I can even prepare myself for it. [...]

Angelo: So we might say that it is important to perceive and recognize these qualities? To be able to differentiate them, label them, analyse them and reflect on them? Isn't this important?

Paulien: Yes, I feel so now, yes. It eventually is. Even though I told so many people about what happened.

Angelo: Mm.

Paulien: But I now think *this* is what happened, yes. And I like this, I mean, I can think about the situation from a different angle, I like that.

At this stage, we can see an important shift in Paulien's perception of the events that happened in the classroom, because in the supervision dialogue the resourceful aspects of the problematic situations are deliberately being highlighted, which of course challenges Paulien's tendency of fixating all of her attention on the problematic aspects of the situation. So the 'broadening and building' happens on top of one's growing awareness of these resources.

4.3. Stage 2: deepened awareness, but also confusion and fears

The last sentence of the previous fragment also reveals another issue in the first supervisory meeting: Paulien's tendency to focus almost exclusively on thinking. Angelo decides to focus on balancing Paulien's thinking, feeling, and wanting to counteract this tendency (cf. principle 3: promoting awareness of cognitive, emotional and emotional aspects). He does so by building on one of her core qualities that surfaced: her respect for the pupils. Cognitively, she recognized this quality in herself, but it did not seem to touch her emotionally. She took it for granted, but did not realize the effect of it in her teaching. Angelo makes her feel the effect of such a quality and the strength of this effect by using the here-and-now of the supervisory relationship:

Angelo: [...] I respect you a lot, as well as the process you're going through. But suppose I would NOT show respect, would that make a difference?

Paulien: O yes! Then I would not give my best as I do now... yes, that's true.

Angelo: Ah, so it IS important. I would say so to.

Paulien: Yes, you're right, that's true indeed. [*awareness of thinking*]

[...]

Angelo: [...] So now you aim to be [*awareness of wanting*] explicitly aware of certain core qualities you express, and their meaning in a specific situation. [...] How does this make you feel, being aware of this and seeing the effects of being conscious of qualities in yourself? [*awareness of feeling*]

Paulien: A feeling of YES, this is indeed what it's all about.

Paulien has now become more aware of the importance of recognizing and appreciating her core qualities and its effects on her pupils. She can recognize some of the qualities after teaching, but the supervisor helps her realize she does not feel them consciously while teaching. Analyzing this in her journal, she asks herself if she *dares* to feel at all.

Journal, Oct. 20: [...] So, what kind of qualities do I recognize? Enthusiasm, humor, respecting people, courage. [...] These are very important, not just for me, but I would also like to encourage these in pupils. But I "know" them, now I have to learn to "feel" them. How can I do this? And not just afterwards, but also right while I'm teaching...

Journal, Nov .8: [...] One way or another I seem not to be in the center of my teaching, I wait what's going to happen, let it happen to me as it were. Why do I do it like this? [...] I seem to more or less "protect" myself, apparently I don't have the guts to be completely *in* my lesson?

Stated in theoretical terms, Paulien seems to become more aware of her *not* being fully present. She starts 'to move down the U': she becomes more aware of herself, of her core qualities and her feelings, but this also creates confusion and anxieties: "If I start to feel more, can I still function well?" In the second session with the supervisor, this becomes a central focus. Much of this session is devoted to 'feeling the feelings', as Damasio (1999, p. 279) calls it, which means negative feelings also. During the meeting, the constructive meaning of negative feelings is explored. The session ends like this:

Paulien: Well, I think that at least I realize better – and I want to keep that in mind – that, well, that negative feelings, too, have a function and that I don't have to be afraid of them.

Although Paulien selected this insight as an important learning episode, this does not automatically appear to lead to fully embracing this insight and acting upon it during her teaching. This is illustrated by the following journal entry. This entry also shows that, although feeling her feelings while teaching may still not be easy for Paulien, she does explore her negative feelings in her reflection *after* a lesson and feels the power of doing so:

Journal, Dec. 12: [...] I feel like nothing has really changed [since I started teaching]. Did I not learn *anything*? [...] When Merel [a pupil] told me last week that the lesson was chaotic, I tried at that moment to feel my feelings in the here-and-now. I managed to do so for a moment, but I immediately felt dizzy, very unpleasant. Apparently, the mechanism to protect myself is not there for nothing. What did I protect myself from? Let me recall the situation... if my feeling is right, I think I wanted to protect myself from a feeling of being rejected... Yes, that's it, that's how I felt. Strange, when I think this through, it is kind of weird. Merel did not reject me (as a person) at all, she only judged part of my behaviour, namely my lack of acting when there is chaos in the classroom... Insight! Oh, this feels great, I feel much calmer now. Why do I do this only five days later? Why can't I do this any sooner? Even during the lesson, as Angelo would like me to? Yes, yes, uncertainty, fear to get hurt... but if I hadn't done this little exercise now, I would have entered the classroom a lot more negatively tomorrow, I think. I don't *have* to change as a person, I "just" have to learn some behavioural stuff. Well, this sounds a lot less threatening...

Paulien's description of what happened during the lesson illustrates the confusion and fears connected to extending one's comfort zone. Angelo's main strategy in this process is being fully present with Paulien's reflective processes, focusing on her core qualities and using empathy. This is why a focus on qualities as well as trust and empathy from the supervisor are so important to support the process: this counterbalances the feelings of fear that trigger the teacher's closing up. In the final interview (May), Paulien answers the question of what worked well in Angelo's approach:

[...] specifically the unconditional acceptance of everything I encountered, and that I felt that everything I said really

mattered, I found that... I mean it gives so much space to telling just everything you want. It caused me to feel that I could elaborate the things I said and felt, and I found that very important.

This corresponds to the core reflection idea that when supervisors allow themselves to consciously bring their whole presence into the supervisory situation, this always deepens their ability to listen, empathize, and understand in profound ways.

Finally, the latter part of the journal entry above also shows how Paulien's strength in thinking now helps her reframe what is happening at the emotional level.

4.4. Stage 3: reflection at the identity layer and confrontation with an existential tension

In the third session (Jan. 14), Paulien and Angelo reach the identity layer. A limiting core belief becomes more specific: Paulien believes about herself that if she opens herself fully to feelings, she might not know how to cope with these when they are negative. Elaborating on this existential fear for negative feelings, which is described in her journal of Dec. 12 (see above), Angelo detects during the Jan. 14 meeting how Paulien tends to *think why* she has certain negative feelings and helps her discover that she can *just feel* such feelings. They discuss that accepting such feelings is part of accepting yourself.

Angelo: So what would it be like if you would not believe this thought of "I might faint" anymore, but instead see the thought just as it is: an assumption that is definitely wrong, a misconception. The whole idea that you might faint because of certain feelings is just... a misconception, which only has an effect if you believe in it.

[...]

Paulien: It would mean that I would have confidence in... just in me. That I would know I wouldn't faint in those kind of moments. That I would manage. That it would be okay.

Angelo: If you just stick to that. How would *that* be. What do you feel?

Paulien: Yes, that's an extremely happy feeling. That's really... it really makes me happy.

Angelo: What exactly triggers that happy feeling?

Paulien: The idea that I do not have to be afraid.

Angelo: Okay. Let's go one step further in your understanding. Why exactly don't you need to be afraid of those kind of feelings anymore?

Paulien: (silence) Yes, confidence. Having confidence in me. And in the pupils. And... well especially self-confidence.

Angelo: Self-confidence. But why, how can self-confidence help you at the moment you encounter such negative feelings? Because that's what you're actually saying, isn't it?

Paulien: (after a silence) It gives a kind of peace of mind. To have confidence in yourself means, I think, that whenever you're faced with something negative, that you can deal with it. That it would not *really* matter. That you will manage nonetheless.

In retrospect, during the final interview, Angelo explained how important he considers feeling the feelings during a lesson to be, and why he focused on this issue: "The deeper significance is that only on the basis of awareness of her feelings, Paulien will get sufficient direction *from within herself* for immediate adaptation of her lesson plan while teaching." In terms of the core reflection theory, Paulien has got in touch with a core belief about herself (if I start to feel, I will faint), so a belief at the identity layer. This might be a 'frozen belief', perhaps developed earlier in life when there was insufficient internal and external support to 'survive' amidst strong negative feelings. Traditionally, many therapeutic approaches were

focused on working with these past experiences. Basic to the core reflection theory is, however, that this is not necessary, and that you can learn to fully deal with such a core belief and rediscover your natural state of being if you 'unfreeze' by

1. starting to fully *feel* the negative, limiting impact of the core belief on your functioning in the here-and-now,
2. while *feeling* your own presence in the here-and-now as a state prior to that belief (Almaas, 1986),
3. *understanding* the belief as a powerless mental construct, and
4. developing the *will* to no longer let the belief guide you (Assagioli, 1973).

This is exactly what happens in this stage. Angelo helps Paulien identify an internal obstacle (key principle 2) by focusing on feelings surrounding the core belief and her motivation (will) to deal with the belief (key principle 3).

4.5. Stage 4: discovering presence and deconstructing core beliefs

Immediately after the previous transcript, the conversation proceeds to the next stage, in which the core belief is further deconstructed. Angelo combines a focus on the core quality of trust, and a focus on feeling the feelings:

Angelo: Just stick to that insight for a moment. If you do have this confidence that everything would be okay, then you say you would manage. What does it do to you if you just stick to that, if you concentrate on that?

Paulien: Oh, it gives such a peace of mind!

Angelo: Aha. Now keep feeling that peace of mind and observe what it is that evokes that peace of mind in you. [...] Concentrate on this and see, what is it, what do I realize that makes me start to feel that peace of mind?

Paulien: Well, yes, here's that self-confidence again.

Paulien starts to differentiate herself from her feelings: she experiences that she *has* feelings, but she also experiences that she *is more than* her feelings (a principle formulated by Assagioli, 1965), because she starts to feel and recognize her presence as being more fundamental than her mental constructs and the emotional effects of these constructs. Through this awareness, her capacity to stay in the here-and-now, while feeling the feelings, is growing. In other words, her capacity for presence starts to develop. All Angelo has to do is to support and label this (key principle 4).

Paulien: And I could elaborate upon why that's the case, why I get a feeling of "not being there", and that even if they [the pupils] don't do anything, I still feel they seem to draw on me... But I don't need to do that: I just don't like that feeling. Full stop! And that's okay! I don't know, I feel kind of pleased that I allow myself... I AM allowed to not like certain things!

Angelo: That sounds very accepting! "I AM allowed to not like certain things."

Paulien: Yes!!

[...]

Paulien: It's allowed! It's part of the deal. In fact, it would be rather strange if I didn't feel it that way!

Angelo: Great! You're beaming with joy!

Paulien: I'm really happy, yes! (laughs) Yes, you know, when I think this over, and feeling like this, it's not just me for which it's much more pleasant, but also for my pupils.

Angelo: Yes, what would be the effect on pupils, what would make it more pleasant for them?

Paulien: I think they would understand it better, that they would accept it better. I think they just cannot believe that such a situation would not affect me. Something like that. I think they

are better able to accept me as a person. Wow, all this 'acceptance' I feel right now!!

This session appears to be a breakthrough. Afterwards, Paulien is totally overwhelmed and can only write down a couple of words in her journal like "self-acceptance" and "I am not my feelings". This kind of joy is typical for the core reflection process at the stage that teachers start to discover the powerful sense of their own state of presence, in the midst of their professional functioning, and because of that feel a deep fulfillment as well as a feeling of relief, which is the effect of seeing mental constructs in a more objective way.

4.6. Stage 5: deepening presence

We cannot be certain about Paulien's process during the next days, but her journal shows that a week later she starts daring to "be herself" while teaching:

Journal, Jan. 21: I notice on all fronts that I'm feeling more "me" among the pupils. [...] I felt great and totally "present". [...] I was aware that I felt relaxed. And that precisely this relaxed feeling made me feel really "free" in my actions in class. I noticed that this felt relaxed and "natural".

In the half-way interview in January, this is confirmed as Paulien says:

I have the feeling that I am learning to be myself [...] I am more and more aware of how I want to be as a teacher [...] I just feel so much stronger. I'm getting better at just determining what I want and what I feel. I still find that difficult, but I'm learning to [...] I don't feel like I'm someone else, but I understand better who I am.

Theoretically, we see that Paulien starts to rediscover her natural potential for presence.

Journal, March 3: [...] I feel stronger every minute, it feels like I'm more and more the manager of what we are doing in class. I'm more and more in charge, while on the other hand I feel I'm more and more letting pupils take charge as well. So what am I taking charge of? Maybe at first I tried to take charge of the pupils, while at the moment I'm taking charge of 'the lesson'. I know the latter has to be 'the pupils' learning process'. So the lesson went well, but the pupils' learning is still not very obvious. I know, I cannot be satisfied until that's taken care of, but that moment will come, I can feel it.

This latter fragment illustrates how Paulien's personal learning process starts to enhance her capacity for 'professional reflection' and the integration with effective professional behaviour.

4.7. Stage 6: towards autonomy in core reflection and maintaining presence

In order to maintain presence, one needs to become autonomous in using core reflection. Now that Paulien is learning to be herself, Angelo in a next meeting (March 5) tries to make the process of core reflection she is going through explicit as an important step towards enhancing her autonomy in using core reflection (key principle 7). In fact, together they explore the effects of the strategies used by Angelo. They focus on what Paulien really wants (to do or feel), how she obstructs or limits herself (by creating disempowering mental constructs), and what she might do to deconstruct such obstacles. This appears to further deepen Paulien's insights into herself. At the end of the session the conversation goes as follows:

Paulien: So in the situation I just described, then I'm sitting there feeling stressed [because I only have one hour to prepare lessons], and then it comes: the moment that I recognize: now I'm doing it again, creating my own stress?

Angelo: Yes, you're creating your own stress.

Paulien: Yes [...] and then I think: well, this is NOT what I want. What I do want is peace and quiet. The feeling of oh, I actually have one whole hour, let me think, what kind of interesting things I can do in one hour!

Angelo: Great!

Paulien: Yes, this is what I want... Oh, I'm going to use this immediately! Because this is something I do quite often. Creating my own stress.

Angelo: Hmhm.

Paulien: Yes, I know, yes, I recognize this so much. Terrible, isn't it?

Angelo: So what are you going to do?

Paulien: Well, I'm not going to create my own stress. Never again! Here and now decided!

And right after the meeting (March 5), Paulien writes in her journal:

Ingeborg [a colleague] [...] said I could also say to myself: I have a *whole hour* to think of something great to do in that lesson! Now THAT gave so much energy... and I had all kinds of ideas in only a few minutes. All I had to do was to work them out, but I had plenty of time for that now... Now I understand why "peace and quiet" are so important to me [to aim for]: I need it to be creative. What a terrific insight this is. So true!

Paulien reports on using this insight and describes in her journal (March 18) how it worked out in her lessons:

We started the lesson with a new topic: mass media. I really enjoy this topic, in which you can pay attention to the various types of media and how they function in society. This first lesson is an introduction. I wanted to provide an overview, and to start with the first aspect: communication. Verbal, non-verbal communication, direct and indirect, all very interesting. Specifically, because pupils would communicate in all kinds of ways all day long, if it were up to them! It would be a whole-group lesson, which I sometimes find a bit more difficult, but now I felt this would suit the purpose best. I was a bit doubtful whether the pupils would pay attention for such a long time. But it was no problem whatsoever! On the contrary, they were very enthusiastic about the subject and its significance. It was such a nice experience. It was a kind of whole-class conversation, I asked questions and so did they. I gave examples, and so did they. Everybody was involved and we exchanged all kinds of interesting and funny ideas. Then I suddenly realized that they really liked my thinking and laughing along with them and that the fact that I was clearly enthusiastic about the subject *and* the lesson, made *them* enthusiastic as well. There was not a single moment that their attention faded. The end of the lesson just came as a surprise: we hardly noticed the bell signalling the end of the lesson.

In the above excerpt, we can see how Paulien is not only able to translate her subject matter knowledge into an inspiring lesson, but also how much Paulien was really present in the here-and-now, and no longer struggled with the feelings of chaos, of detachment or disempowering mental constructs. On the contrary, in the here-and-now, and "in-action", she is aware of her feelings and of her core quality of enthusiasm and its effect on her pupils. The professional and the personal aspects of teaching seem to flow together.

In a following meeting (March 26), Paulien and Angelo further elaborate Paulien's new insights and self-awareness, based on her growing capacity for presence. They discuss how this relates to

directly experiencing herself, her pupils and her teaching. Paulien describes how this implies awareness of her feelings and she states that this results in clearer thinking about (mechanisms in) herself. Important is that Paulien becomes aware of how she frustrates 'being herself' by a tendency to detach herself from the here-and-now, and that she is developing the capacity to alter this tendency. Angelo's strategies are (1) promoting reflection on the *meaning* of presence, (2) stimulating Paulien to *imagine* always to be fully present, (3) helping her to *deconstruct* limiting beliefs that suppress the experience of presence, and (4) *explaining* the core reflection theory.

Paulien: I do believe that I *am* much more, that more and more I learn to genuinely *be*. [...] It gives such a happy feeling [laughs]. It specifically comes to me in sudden realizations. Then there is this sudden insight and then BANG, I *am*. Something like that. Then I'm very aware of, well, yes, of *me* [...]

Angelo: [...] And what does this mean to you, when you teach from this sense of being, or, being a teacher who's able to teach from her inner sense of being? Imagine you would always be able to teach from your sense of being, your inner self? What would this mean?

Paulien: Well, it would save so much of your energy. If you're really yourself – I know it's strange, but it's really hard to be yourself – but if you finally succeed in being yourself, everything just comes naturally. [...] But I find very difficult, when I loose touch with myself, to reconnect with myself.

Angelo: [...] It's just an imaginary construction in your mind. At such a moment, first you have to recognize it, then you have to name it, reflect on it, and then you have to connect to it. *Then* the process will start from the inside, from yourself. [...]

Paulien: So, what you're actually saying is that this feeling that nothing really touches me, so this dissociating that I'm doing, that this is just something I created myself?!

Angelo: Yes, you were not born that way, you acquired it.

Paulien: O well, then I *immediately* want to get rid of it, it's so irritating! It's *véry* annoying.

Angelo: It's very annoying indeed. And you don't want it.

Paulien: No!

After this meeting, all journal entries as well as the final supervision sessions carry a much lighter tone. Paulien describes and analyses her lessons in a much calmer way, which is more in tune with her lesson objectives. For example, in the final session (June 10), Paulien describes a lesson she had given the week before, in which pupils had to analyse and discuss arguments judges use when judging suspects and deciding on their punishment. They were given descriptions of real cases, and had to think about the type and degree of punishment. Paulien describes how well pupils worked, and how well they debated the cases. Motivation and involvement were high. Then she noticed that three pupils were looking out of the window or were not contributing to the discussion:

Paulien: I saw that their attention had faded... and they always get very quiet. And I wanted to know – I now believe that's my responsibility – why their attention faded. So I asked and they said it wasn't because they weren't interested... they found it very difficult to put forward their OWN points, they didn't know how to start... It was a serious case they were discussing, and other pupils were talking about the death penalty, but they felt much too insecure to think in such terms... They were not yet ready for what I expected them to do: to think about their own opinion. ... and I realized at that very moment that it's my responsibility to bring pupils and content together and this gave me clues about how I might do that... I have to ASK why pupils are sometimes not involved, and not make up preliminary

conclusions. ... We talked about it, and I helped them along. It was then that they became enthusiastic.

Again this illustrates how much Paulien was present in the here-and-now and, because of that, was able to effectively deal with the situation. In the supervisory session, Paulien told Angelo that during the lesson, she also started to realize that she had expected the pupils to spontaneously tell her of their problems in keeping up with the lesson or paying attention. She had come to realize that in fact she was treating her pupils as if they were adults able to phrase their own problems.

Angelo: What was it like, to realize this at that very moment?

Paulien: Quite painful, actually. I always wanted to treat them with as much respect as possible, and I discovered that I didn't really respect the fact that they are... well... just kids, actually.

Angelo: But you dealt with it, didn't you?

Paulien: Well, yes, we talked about it, and in fact I was rather pleased that I could now help them.

The focus in the supervisory session is now on integrating Paulien's new insights into her analyses of her teaching practice, and on her own capacity to do so while teaching (reflection-in-action). The above examples illustrate that this capacity is growing. The following example is about Paulien's problem in confronting a specific pupil who displays disturbing behaviour during her lessons, and again illustrates how she starts to find ways of teaching that are both adequate in a professional sense and in line with who she is. In other words, a further connection between the professional and the personal in her teaching is developing. What Angelo does here is listen, accept, and give empathic feedback. At this stage, this fits key principle 5: trust in the process that takes place from within the person.

Paulien: [This is an example of] what I said earlier, that I find it difficult to confront people with their behaviour.

Angelo: yes.

Paulien: And eh... now that I think about it, I have to... How foolish not to have thought of this before! I sometimes *do* it, but not in a conscious way – I have to much more discuss these matters in terms of their relationships with the other pupils, and also try – and this is something I do a bit more often – try to show them: I really do appreciate your critical contributions during lessons, but there's also a pitfall to such a quality, let's call it a pitfall. It can turn against you. And *that* is something I want to discuss more.

Angelo: That's something you want to discuss more.

Paulien: *That's* what I want to do more often. That's something that suits me better than telling people "uh-uh, you're not allowed to do this".

Angelo: You seem very happy now! Realizing that it does not suit you at all...

Paulien: Yes, but at the same time, I'm also annoyed that I didn't see it like this before. I'm very impatient, especially with myself... But I really have the feeling this is something I can pursue. This is how I want it.

[...]

Angelo: That sounds very convincing.

Paulien: It is!

Angelo: That is inspiring.

Paulien: Yes, I'm really looking forward to it, I could ring her right this evening so to speak... [laughs] [...] This is such an important insight to me!

Paulien is 'in flow' now. In the final interview, Paulien describes how she tries to maintain her presence while teaching.

Interviewer: So how do you do this now, core reflection without Angelo?

Paulien: Well yes, for example, during a lesson in which I forget to be myself so to speak, I notice this during the lesson, and I can do something about it.

Interviewer: Could you describe this? I find that interesting. How do you notice this? What is this “noticing”?

Paulien: Well, that I *hear* myself talking. I hear myself and then I think something like “how would she finish this sentence?” Like I’m thinking about myself in the third person, something like that.

Interviewer: So you notice that this is happening, and what happens then?

Paulien: Then I don’t panic like I used to.

Interviewer: You don’t panic.

Paulien: No, then I’m thinking “oh, here I’m doing it again.” And then I immediately think “well, I don’t want this, and I don’t need to, it’s nonsense”. And then I turn around as it were... then I start focusing on the fact that I don’t want this, and sometimes I need some time to do so, but that’s okay, I do take that time now. Earlier, I felt “well, I need to finish this sentence no matter what, or I need to finish my story”, a very stressful feeling, but now I will think “okay, I need some rest now”. And then I can call this ‘being present’ to the fore really easily. It just comes. In the beginning I needed some deep breaths to do so, and to focus on my stomach... I know this sounds strange, but that’s how it goes for me.

In the final interview with Angelo, he indicates the following changes in Paulien:

Now Paulien even finds it pleasant and interesting to deal with her feelings. She also considers feelings as being very practical, useful, and she is much more familiar with her feelings. [...] Even more importantly, she is very interested in being totally present. This has touched her deeply. It has led to an increased capacity for steering, for determining what she wants.

Angelo sees an important connection between these two shifts:

‘To be yourself’ means ultimately to be able to *recognize* and *feel* one’s own state of presence in the here-and-now, while functioning in the situations one encounters in daily life.

In addition, the theoretical claim that presence concurs with a stronger connection with one’s inner strengths, was confirmed by scores of both Paulien and Angelo on the Questionnaire on Core Qualities. At the start and at the end of the supervision, they both assessed the degree to which Paulien used her core qualities.

Table 1 shows that the scores on almost all core qualities increased after the supervision period. Specifically, Paulien’s scores show a remarkable difference between the two moments she filled in the QCQ, in all areas (thinking, feeling and slightly less in wanting). Angelo saw the biggest shifts in the core qualities grouped under ‘feeling’. This relates to stages 3 and 4 in Paulien’s development, in which Angelo specifically focused on ‘feeling the feelings’ and feeling presence.

5. Conclusions and discussion

This research study shows how, through the core reflection approach, the concept of presence can be made operational in the supervision of student teachers. The approach aims at connecting the personal and the professional in teaching. The data analysis showed how this connection took place in the professional development of one teacher. It revealed a path of successive stages in her development that concur with the theoretical framework and at the same time sharpen it. The supervisory interventions that brought about this development have been made explicit in Section 4.

Table 1

Paulien’s use of core qualities, scored on 7-point Likert scales.

Core qualities	According to Paulien		According to Angelo	
	Start (October)	End (June)	Start (October)	End (June)
Thinking				
Creativity	4	7	6	6
Structuredness	3	6	6	6
Clarity	3	5	5	6
Accuracy	2	5	5	5
Feeling				
Commitment	4	7	5	7
Empathy	2	6	5	7
Compassion	2	4	6	7
Trust	4	6	4	7
Tolerance	4	5	4	6
Care	4	5	6	7
Wanting				
Decisiveness	5	6	5	6
Perseverance	4	7	5	5
Courage	5	5	5	6
Median	4	5 and 6	5	7
Minimum	2	4	4	5

In this final section, we will connect the supervisory interventions used by the supervisor to the key principles of the core reflection theory as outlined earlier in this article. We will do so by providing an overview of the relations, organized around the stages we found in the teacher’s development (see Table 2).

The connection between the personal and the professional appeared to take place through a shift in awareness: the teacher’s reflection moved from a focus on the many problems she encountered towards more awareness of her strengths, her presence and her view of how she wanted to teach. This represents a movement to the more inner layers of the onion model, the layers of identity and mission. Based on this deeper awareness, the teacher develops professional behaviour that is both appropriate to managing her classes and matches who she is. This leads to her experience of “being-while-teaching”, as she expressed it at the end of the process. Table 1 shows how she could now use her core qualities in teaching much better. In terms of the U-theory of Senge et al. (2004), the teacher’s consciousness expanded from the surface of the onion towards the ‘bottom’ of the U (presence) through a deliberate focus of attention (mindfulness) and from this again ‘upward’ to effective behaviour in concrete professional situations.

Of course, the scope of this study was limited in the sense that only one teacher was involved. On the other hand, this made it possible to analyse in depth both the supervisory process and the resulting teacher development. The aim of the study was not so much ‘to prove’ that the core reflection approach is effective, which would require another research design, but to analyse how it can work out in a concrete situation. What it did prove, however, was that the concept of presence can be made operational in the field of teaching and teacher education, and how this can be done.

In the supervisory process we described, the supervisor uses a combination of a non-directive and a directive approach. The essence of core reflection is to build the process onto the teacher’s own concerns, while at the same time following a directive approach towards promoting the teacher’s awareness and actualization of personal strengths. The reason for the non-directive aspect is to promote the teacher’s ownership of the learning process, which according to Rogers (1969) requires interventions such as respect, empathy, and acceptance. The directive interventions are aimed at overcoming what Peterson, Maier, and Seligman (1993) called ‘learned helplessness’: the tendency to believe that one has no control over a situation. As Snyder and Lopez (2007, p.

Table 2

Relations between stages in the teacher's development, key principles of the core reflection approach, and the supervisor's interventions.

Stages in teacher's development	Key principles of the core reflection approach	Supervisor's interventions
Stage 1: chaos and a fixation on problems	Promoting awareness of ideals and core qualities (#1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focusing on acceptance of problems and empathic understanding • Focusing on positive experiences and strengths
Stage 2: deepened awareness; confusion and fears	Promoting awareness of cognitive, emotional and motivational aspects (#3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focusing on balanced attention for feeling, wanting and thinking • Self-exposure • Being present
Stage 3: reflection at the identity layer and confrontation with an existential tension	Identifying internal obstacles to act out ideals and core qualities (#2), and promoting a state of presence in which the person is fully aware of this (#4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explaining focusing on feelings • Exploring the core belief • Focus on staying present with the core belief • Empowerment by focusing on emerging core qualities
Stage 4: discovering presence and deconstructing core beliefs	Trust in the process that takes place from within the person (#5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on core qualities; focus on feeling the feelings • Support for the state of presence
Stage 5: deepening presence	Promoting a state of presence in which the person is fully aware (cognitively and emotionally) of the discrepancy or friction between 1 and 2 and the self-created nature of the internal obstacles (#4) Trust in the process that takes place from within the person (#5) Support of acting out the inner potential within the situation under reflection (#6)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expressing trust • Modeling presence
Stage 6: towards autonomy in core reflection and maintaining presence	Promoting autonomy in using core reflection (#7)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explaining the process of core reflection • Use of imagination • Listening and accepting

195) discuss it, changing such beliefs requires strong 'enhancement strategies', directed at developing more optimism and hope. This principle is central to positive psychology (Peterson, 2006).

Was the teacher's developmental process completed? We do not think so. It may take her much longer to really become completely autonomous in using core reflection. Perhaps individual supervision is also not the most effective way to promote such autonomy. From core reflection workshops given to a large number of teachers, we have reasons to believe that learning how to use core reflection in supervising a colleague seems to be more effective for learning how to apply the approach to oneself. Perhaps this is an example of the well known principle that the best way to learn something, is to teach it to someone else.

Because of the fact that we studied only one teacher, we believe that the six stages we found in her learning process cannot be generalized to all situations in which core reflection is used in supervision. In fact, we already know that there are more stages than the ones we found. For example, Almaas (1988) distinguishes many deeper levels of presence or states of consciousness in his theory of human development.

Finally, a question might be whether the described supervision process is in fact therapy. In a previous article on core reflection, Korthagen and Vasalos (2005) explain that they think that the opposite is true:

Originally, the Greek word 'therapy' refers to 'healing', and thus has the connotation of an illness that has to be overcome. This is exactly what Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000) point to as the traditional, ineffective view of psychology on human growth. [...] Core reflection aims at building on people's strengths, and on the positive feelings often triggered when people feel in touch with positive meanings, and with their strengths. Through this, they can get into a state of optimal functioning that Csikszentmihalyi (1990) calls *flow*, a state which promotes rapid learning (p. 64).

Core reflection can inevitably have consequences beyond the process of teaching. For example, it may make people aware of their level of "presence" in non-teaching situations as well and how this affects their behaviour or performance. In the final interview, the teacher being studied confirmed that in her private life she also used to think rather than to feel (and her journal provides some examples of this), and that she had also profited from making the connection to self in non-teaching situations. As Korthagen and Vasalos (2005) wrote:

[...] no neat and watertight boundary can be drawn between professional core issues and personal biographical material. On the other hand, it is not difficult for supervisors to make a deliberate choice to stick to the professional domain, and leave other areas out of the reflective conversation, something that we advocate in our courses for teacher educators.

The transcripts of the supervision process as presented in the present article show that the supervisor did indeed make that choice. The pitfall of the fear of 'becoming too therapeutic' is that teacher educators may be so afraid of touching issues beyond the professional domain that they miss important opportunities for supporting the integration of the personal and professional in teachers. In our view, it is important to make a distinction between (1) the issues that are dealt with and (2) the goals of external support. This leads to the diagram in Fig. 4. Whereas the fields 3 and 4 can be seen as the domains of therapy, our study shows that it is possible, beneficial, and perhaps even necessary, to include field #2 in our thinking about professional development.

If the supervisor in this study would have stuck to field #1 by focusing on the outer layers of the onion model, would the teacher have learned to integrate the personal and the professional by herself? Of course, we do not know. However, we have referred to a number of authors who believe that in many teachers a gap between these two areas is maintained if there is no external support for bridging this gap, and that this may have negative

Goal of external support	Issues dealt with	
	Professional	Personal
Professional development	1	2
Personal growth	3	4

Fig. 4. Issues in and goals of supervision.

consequences. In his book *A hidden wholeness*, Palmer (2004) elaborates on the risks of “living divided” as a teacher (p. 9), and ends this book by pointing towards the benefits of “living divided no more”:

Knowing with new clarity that the gift of life is ours only for a while, we choose to live “divided no more” simply because it would be foolish not to. As we live into that choice, we see with new clarity that all the life around us is “something precious to the earth,” and we find more and more ways to honor the soul in ourselves and in every mortal creature (p. 186).

In this respect, paying attention to the connection of the personal and the professional in teaching and teacher education may contribute to educational goals that go far beyond the development of the individual teacher.

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