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THE ROLE OF PROFESSIONAL REFLECTION IN DEVELOPING TRANSVERSAL COMPETENCIES OF FUTURE TEACHERS

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ABSTRACT

Professional reflection plays a critical role in fostering transversal competencies among future teachers. These competencies, encompassing critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and adaptability, are essential for navigating the complexities of modern education. This article examines the theoretical underpinnings of professional reflection, its application in teacher training programs, and its impact on transversal competency development. The study integrates qualitative and quantitative analyses, supported by illustrative examples and tables summarizing key findings.

KEYWORDS

Professional reflection, transversal competencies, future teachers, critical thinking, communication skills, collaboration, adaptability, teacher training programs, experiential learning theory, transformative learning theory, reflective practices, journaling, peer discussions, video analysis, teacher education, continuous improvement, structured reflection, digital tools in education, self-assessment, institutional support.

INTRODUCTION

The teaching profession demands more than subject-specific expertise; it requires a broad set of transversal competencies to manage diverse classrooms, foster inclusive education, and adapt to rapid societal

changes. Professional reflection, defined as the deliberate process of analyzing and evaluating one's teaching practices, emerges as a vital tool in equipping future teachers with these skills.

This paper addresses the following questions:

1. What is the role of professional reflection in teacher education?
2. How does it facilitate the development of transversal competencies?
3. What strategies can be implemented to enhance reflective practices among future teachers?

Theoretical Framework

Professional reflection aligns with the principles of experiential learning theory (Kolb, 1984) and transformative learning theory (Mezirow, 1997). These frameworks emphasize learning through experience and critical examination of beliefs, attitudes, and actions. Figure 1 illustrates the cyclical process of professional reflection in teacher education.

- Experience: Engaging in teaching activities.
- Observation: Collecting data and feedback.
- Reflection: Analyzing practices and outcomes.
- Application: Implementing improved strategies.

METHODOLOGY

A mixed-methods approach was adopted to investigate the role of professional reflection in developing transversal competencies. Data collection involved:

1. Surveys: Administered to 150 teacher trainees to assess their reflective practices and transversal competencies.
2. Interviews: Conducted with 20 teacher educators to understand their perspectives on fostering professional reflection.
3. Case Studies: Documenting reflective activities in three teacher training programs.

DISCUSSION

1. Impact on Transversal Competencies

Analysis revealed a significant correlation between reflective practices and the development of transversal competencies.

Table 1 summarizes the key competencies enhanced through reflection:

| No | Competency | Reflective Practice Impact |
|----|-------------------|---|
| 1. | Critical Thinking | Enhanced ability to analyze and solve problems. |
| 2. | Communication | Improved articulation of ideas and feedback. |

| | | |
|----|---------------|---|
| 3. | Collaboration | Greater teamwork and conflict resolution. |
| 4. | Adaptability | Better response to classroom dynamics. |

2. Effective Reflective Practices

Key practices identified include:

- Journaling: Writing daily reflections on teaching experiences.
- Peer Discussions: Collaborating with colleagues to gain diverse perspectives.
- Video Analysis: Reviewing recorded teaching sessions to identify strengths and areas for improvement.

3. Challenges

Despite its benefits, professional reflection faces barriers such as limited time, insufficient training, and

resistance to self-critique. Addressing these challenges requires institutional support and a culture of continuous improvement.

Practical Implications

To integrate professional reflection effectively, teacher training programs should:

1. Include structured reflection modules in their curricula.
2. Provide digital tools for self-assessment and feedback.
3. Foster a supportive environment that values critical self-analysis.

Table 2: Strategies for Enhancing Reflective Practices

| No | Strategy | Implementation Example |
|----|--------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1. | Structured Journals | Guided prompts for daily reflections. |
| 2. | Collaborative Reflection | Regular peer review sessions. |
| 3. | Use of Technology | Online platforms for video analysis. |

| | | |
|----|------------------------------------|---|
| 4. | Professional Development Workshops | Training sessions on reflective techniques. |
|----|------------------------------------|---|

CONCLUSION

Professional reflection serves as a cornerstone in developing the transversal competencies essential for future teachers. By fostering critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and adaptability, reflective practices prepare educators for the multifaceted challenges of modern classrooms. Teacher education programs must prioritize reflection as a fundamental component, supported by effective strategies and institutional commitment.

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