

5-2023

Education Brief

Empowering Schools
in Self-Regulation of
Media and Information
Literacy processes

emile



emile

Empowering Schools
in Self-Regulation of
Media and Information
Literacy processes



Citation: Emile Finland (2023), Reflection is a Core for Teacher Professional Development. Emile Brief 5: pp. 3-5. *Website Page*

Copyright: © 2023 Emile Finland. This is an open access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited.

Data Availability Statement: All relevant data are within the paper and its Supporting Information files.

Competing Interests: The Author(s) declare(s) no conflict of interest.



Reflection is a Core for Teacher Professional Development

Pirjo Kulju, Emile Finland*
University of Tampere

Reflecting on teaching experiences is seen as the cornerstone of a teacher's professional development.

Why is reflection important in teacher education?

Teaching experience and its reflection are currently seen as a significant basis for teachers' professional development (Allas *et al.*, 2020). The core of teacher reflection is in analyzing teaching experiences to achieve a deeper understanding of teaching and learning (Mäkinen, 2013). In other words, reflection gives teachers a means to understand their school practices and tools to develop their teaching. Besides that reflection supports teachers in connecting theoretical concepts and practice (e.g., Kulju & Mäkinen, 2023), teacher reflection seems to be positively related to teachers' occupational self-efficacy (Runhaar *et al.*, 2010), student learning (Babaei *et al.*, 2016), and even job satisfaction (Aliakbari *et al.*, 2020).

Recently, reflection has become more important in finding ways to support teachers to critically assess changes in society and renew school pedagogy (Mäkinen, 2013). For instance, the wide spread of misinformation on the internet is a topical challenge for the teaching of critical reading in schools. Teachers are responsible for preparing their students with sufficient critical online reading skills to help them to analyze, evaluate, and interpret the conflicting information they encounter. Thus, in the field of teacher education, reflective practices need to constantly be developed to support pre- and in-service teachers in their professional development.

* Emile Finland includes: Riikka Anttonen, Carita Kiili, Kristian Kiili, Pirjo Kulju.

What is meant by reflection?

The roots of reflection in learning and teaching lie in Dewey's theory of experience. For Dewey (1933), reflection is thinking about action and its consequences, in which a careful evaluation of experiences, beliefs, and meaning structures is relevant. However, as the teachers' work is hectic, there is a risk of superficial reflection. This means that quick thinking about what could be done better in the next lesson (action-oriented reflection) may skip the deeper understanding of the situation (Korthagen, 2014; Schön, 1983). Meaning-oriented reflection, on the other hand, contributes to the professional development as it focuses on underlying processes, such as teachers' beliefs or identity (Korthagen, 2014). Overall, reflective thinking looks back on the assumptions and beliefs, and simultaneously, it looks forward to the implications or consequences of a reported action (Toom *et al.*, 2015).

How can reflection be implemented in teacher education?

In teacher education, it is essential to facilitate the reflection process by developing a guided and systematic reflection procedure. Guiding questions facilitate the reflection by promoting thinking about practical experiences and triggering the process

of decomposing the experience, pondering it, and associating given situations with prior knowledge (Allas *et al.* 2020; Husu *et al.*, 2008; Kulju & Mäkinen, 2023). As teacher co-learning is found to be important in professional development (Avalos, 2011), joint discussions and possible co-teaching experiences can also facilitate reflections.

Reflection can also be connected to certain subject matters. Then, the focus is on developing pedagogical content knowledge through reflection. For instance, the guiding questions may be such as: *What you intend the students to learn about this idea?; Why it is important for the students to know about this?; What difficulties and limitations are connected with teaching this idea?; What kind of teaching procedures will you use to engage with this idea?; What are the particular reasons for using these procedures?* (Loughran *et al.*, 2012).

Recently, the link between emotions and reflection has also been called for as it leads to a more holistic reflection that takes into account the inner life of teachers (Beauchamp, 2015; Mälkki *et al.*, 2022). This brings another layer to teacher reflection as they can gently explore the emotions aroused by certain teaching situations. At their best these types of reflective processes lead to a deeper understanding of one's teaching practices.

Practical tips for teacher education

- The core of teacher reflection is in analyzing teaching experiences.
- In teacher education, reflection can take place before, during, and after actual teaching practices.
- Reflection can be facilitated by guiding questions, either written or spoken.
- Joint discussions with other pre- and in-service teachers support reflection.

Reference list:

Aliakbari, M., Khany, R. & Adibpour, M. (2020). "EFL Teachers' Reflective Practice, Job Satisfaction, and School Context Variables: Exploring Possible Relationships." *TESOL Journal*, 11 (1), 1-20. <https://doi.org/10.1002/tesj.461>.

Allas, R., Leijen, Ä. & Toom, A. (2020). "Guided Reflection Procedure as a Method to facilitate Student Teachers' Perception of Their Teaching to support the Construction of Practical Knowledge." *Teachers and Teaching*, 26 (2), 166-192. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13540602.2020.1758053>.

Avalos, B. (2011). "Teacher Professional Development in Teaching and Teacher Education over Ten Years." *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 27, 10-20. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2010.08.007>.

Babaei, M. & Abednia, A. (2016). "Reflective Teaching and Self-Efficacy Beliefs: Exploring Relationships in the Context of Teaching EFL in Iran." *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 41 (9). <https://doi.org/10.14221/ajte.2016v41n9.1>.

Beauchamp, C. (2015). "Reflection in Teacher Education: Issues Emerging from a Review of Current Literature." *Reflective Practice*, 16 (1), 123-141. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14623943.2014.982525>.

Dewey, J. (1933). *How we Think: A Restatement of the Relation of Reflective Thinking to the Educative Process*. Boston: D. C. Heath.

Husu, J., Toom, A. & Patrikainen, S. (2008). "Guided Reflection as a Means to demonstrate and develop Student Teachers' Reflective Competencies." *Reflective Practice*, 9 (1), 37-51. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14623940701816642>.

Korthagen, F. (2014). "Promoting Core Reflection in Teacher Education: Deepening Professional Growth." In Orland-Barak, Lily & Craig, Cheryl (Eds.), *International Teacher Education: Promising Pedagogies*. Emerald. Part A, 73-89.

Kulju, P., & Mäkinen, M. (2023). "Opettajaopiskelijat kriittisen nettilukutaidon opetuksen äärellä: Kehittyminen ohjatussa reflektioprosessissa. [Pre-service teachers pondering on teaching critical online literacy. Development in a guided reflection process]." *Kasvatus & Aika*, 17 (1), 134-152. <https://doi.org/10.33350/ka.119384>.

Loughran, J., Berry, A. & Mulhall, P. (2012). *Understanding and Developing Science Teachers' Pedagogical Content Knowledge*, Vol. 12, Sense Publishers.

Mäkinen, M. (2013). "Becoming Engaged in Inclusive Practices: Narrative Reflections as Descriptors of Teachers' Work Engagement in Inclusive Schools." *Teaching and Teacher Education* 35, 51-61. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2013.05.005>.

Mälkki, K., Mäkinen, M. & Forsell, J. (2022). "Revitalizing Reflection in Teacher Education: A Digital Tool for Reflection as a Gentle Trigger for Transformation." In Nicolaidis, Alike, Eshenbacher Saskia, Buergelt, Petra T., Gilpin-Jackson, Yabome, Welch, Marquiritte & Misawa Mitsunori (Eds.), *The Palgrave Handbook of Learning for Transformation*. Palgrave Macmillan, 301-331.

Runhaar, P., Sanders, K., & Yang, H. (2010). "Stimulating Teachers' Reflection and Feedback Asking: An Interplay of Self-Efficacy, Learning Goal Orientation, and Transformational Leadership." *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 26 (5), 1154-1161. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2010.02.011>.



Schön, D. (1983). *The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action*. Basic Books.

Toom, A., Pyhältö, K. & O'Connell Rust, F. (2015). "Teachers' Professional Agency in Contradictory Times." *Teachers and Teaching*, 21 (6), 615-623. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13540602.2015.1044334>.

