

The Creation and Implementation of The Initial Teacher Education Reflective Thinking Questionnaire (ITERT-Q): Recontextualising the Measure and Locating the Reflective Mess We're All In

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Abstract

Reflective practice is often associated with desirable professional attributes, and it is essential that trainee teachers reflect on the basis that effective reflection allows them to think critically, to solve problems, and to improve their practice. However, whilst the role of reflection in the context of teacher training is widely acknowledged, trainees repeatedly struggle to improve their ability to reflect. This presentation showcases part of a wider study that adopted a new means by which trainee teachers' reflective practice was measured. The research asked how do teacher trainees' reflective practice and process develop over time? The investigation adopted a mixed methods methodology, with a multiple case study design, with 9 participants (pre-service trainees FES 14+), with an equal QUAL/QUANT methods mix. Three measures of the ITERT-Q (based upon Mezirow's 4 Levels of Reflective Thinking) were recorded over the trainees' PGCEs. Findings from the investigation fly contrary to much of the literature with evidence indicating that trainees can be supported to reflect effectively given the appropriate platform to do so. Trainees reported how their reflective processes were messy, disjointed from abstract and oversimplified interpretations of how we reflect often located in the literature; their reflections were bespoke and nuanced. The session concludes with final thoughts regarding the significance and wider impact of the study, including the role out of the ITERT-Q onto a newly validated PGCE, the potential the measure holds to be recontextualized further and applied in other vocational settings, and how best we might support novice practitioners with reflection.

Keywords: Further Education; Mezirow; PGCE; Reflection; Trainee Teachers