

# The Role of Reflection in Teachers' Professional Development: Change and Growth Opportunities

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## Abstract

The starting point of the study is reflective practice and its development in relation to the different levels of reflection: descriptive, comparative (contextual) and the highest level of critical reflection. In this context, reflection is seen as an essential element in teachers' personal and professional growth and development. The overall aim of the study is to highlight the specificities of the personal and professional growth of teachers with different levels of experience in developing reflective practice.

### Research question:

- How can teachers' reflective practice be developed in the light of their different experiences of presenting and learning from cases? A qualitative research method was chosen to achieve the research aim. The study used several data collection methods: semi-structured interviews (n=12), focus group discussion (n=5) and case studies (n=10). The study used a multiple triangulation approach. In the first phase of the study, semi-structured interviews were carried out with teachers who have different learning experiences (novice and experienced teachers). In the second phase, a focus group discussion centred on different levels of reflection was carried out. In the third phase, specific cases presented by teachers were analysed as case studies. The fourth phase focused on the analysis of the themes that emerged and the theoretical justification of these themes. In this study, data were coded and analysed using a thematic analysis. Three main features were followed in the analysis of the data: 1. Elements; 2. Interactions; 3. Growth. The elements component focused on people, objects, experiences, roles, social events, etc. The Interaction component identifies the main descriptions of the elements and explores their interrelationships. The growth level focuses on "turning points" that show change and growth by analysing what is happening through reflection. The study showed that teachers analyse and reflect on current situations, paying attention to the emotions experienced, the elements of the experience and the growth through the level of critical reflection. The participants in the study focused on creating new knowledge through experience, managing the flow of information, and identifying and discussing relevant situations and learning.

**Keywords:** Reflection; teacher; reflective practice; personal and professional growth