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Fostering Teacher Immunity, Self-efficacy and Reflective Practice in Tesol Teacher Education

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Abstract

A relatively new construct introduced in the field of language teacher psychology by Hiver and Dörnyei (2017) is language teacher immunity that develops in response to exposure to uncertain, unpredictable, uncontrollable and adverse teaching experiences and environments, which may affect, either positively (productive immunity) or negatively (maladaptive immunity), teaching practices and professional identity formation. Complexity theory provides a valuable framework for understanding the dynamic and situated nature of language teacher immunity, with a view to making sense of the complexities of what language teachers do and why as well as of the dynamics of their classroom practices. In light of the existing research gap and based on a narrative qualitative research design, this exploratory study aims to shed some light on how self-efficacy and reflective practice influence the immunity development of Spanish EFL student teachers during their learning-to-teach process in practicum settings. The narratives shared by the study participants reported evidence of the developmental nature of their teaching immunity as well as of the various factors influencing the immunity changes. Accordingly, the data analysis revealed that the participating EFL student teachers' immunity was influenced by both their self-efficacy and reflective teaching, thus affecting instructional practices and professional development. Since the immunity challenge must be present in any discussion of teacher education, helpful guidelines for TESOL teacher education are then provided to effectively manage and overcome the complexities and challenges of the second language teaching profession.

Keywords: Complexity Theory, Developmental Nature, Identity Formation, Influential Factors, Narrative Inquiry