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Comparison of Heuristic Perspective with Narrative Inquiry in Curriculum Studies: A Critical Review

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Abstract

The gap between theory and practice remains a persistent challenge for teachers. This review article undertakes a comparative analysis of two prominent approaches to addressing this gap: the heuristic orientation found in the works of Narges Ahanchian and F. Michael Connelly's perspective of narrative inquiry. The central issue explored here is the absence of a critical dialogue between these two intellectual traditions, both of which emphasize the significance of the tacit knowledge embedded in teachers' practices. Employing a critical-comparative review method and content analysis of key texts by both scholars, as well as relevant literature, the article articulates the foundational concepts of each perspective. The findings reveal that the principal point of convergence lies in their critique of technical-rational paradigms and their valuing of practitioners' and teachers' practical knowledge. However, their divergence becomes evident in the tension between "generalizability" and "particularity": while the heuristic approach seeks to derive transferable guiding principles emerging from classroom practice, narrative inquiry centers on a deep, contextualized understanding of the uniqueness of individual experience. The article argues that these two perspectives are not contradictory but rather complementary. The implications of this analysis for practice and research include proposals for redesigning teacher education programs, empowering teachers as "curriculum planners," and advancing an integrative framework that draws on the richness of narrative for contextual understanding and on heuristic reasoning for the derivation of practical principles.

Keywords: Teacher Knowledge, Instructional Design; Particularity; Generalizability