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Ready to Face the Classroom? Perceived Readiness of Future Civics Teachers

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Abstract

Ongoing curricular reforms and shifting societal expectations place increasing demands on teacher preparation, particularly within civic education, where prospective educators must navigate complex democratic values, controversial issues, and dynamic classroom realities. This paper explores the subjective perception of professional readiness among pre-service civics teachers approaching graduation from university teacher education programs in Central Europe. Grounded in a qualitative inquiry utilizing focus groups and thematic analysis across distinct higher education faculties, the study examines how student teachers reflect on their emerging pedagogical identities, anticipated instructional challenges, and overall self-efficacy on the threshold of independent practice. By outlining the primary institutional, didactic, and socio-ethical dimensions that shape prospective educators' perceived competence, the presentation contextualizes pre-service transitions within broader international discourses on teacher agency, qualification frameworks, and initial teacher education. The findings offer critical insight into the alignment between academic coursework and real-world professional entry, providing pedagogical implications for curriculum developers and teacher educators aiming to foster resilience, reflective capacity, and robust professional preparedness in contemporary civic instruction across comparable educational environments.

Keywords: Citizenship Education; Pedagogical Self-Efficacy; Qualitative Inquiry; Professional Competence; Transition into Practice