Guided reflection for supporting the development of student teachers’ practical knowledge

Äli Leijen\textsuperscript{a}, Raili Allas\textsuperscript{a}, Auli Toom\textsuperscript{b}, Jukka Husu\textsuperscript{c}, Juan-José Mena Marcos\textsuperscript{d}, Paulien Meijer\textsuperscript{e}, Dubravka Knezic\textsuperscript{e}, Margus Pedaste\textsuperscript{a}, Edgar Krull\textsuperscript{a}

\textsuperscript{a}University of Tartu, \textsuperscript{b}University of Helsinki, \textsuperscript{c}University of Turku, \textsuperscript{d}University of Salamanca, \textsuperscript{e}University of Utrecht,
Why is this topic important?

• Teacher education programs in Europe and beyond have been criticized in the past for leaving a “gap” between theory (i.e. research-generated knowledge) and practice (see for example, Kansanen et al., 2000; Korthagen, 2001; Meijer, 2010; etc.).

• The teacher reflection has been considered a dominant activity for developing practical knowledge and linking it with educational theories in teacher training programs (Korthagen, 2001, 2004; Korthagen & Vasalos, 2005; Korthagen & Wubbels, 1991, 2000).
Reflection in teacher education

- **Reflection** can be defined as a cognitive process carried out in order to **learn from experiences** through individual inquiry and collaboration with others (Benammar, 2004; Dewey, 1933; Mezirow, 1991; Moon, 2004; Schön, 1983).

- The results of reflection assignments implemented in teacher education context are often **disappointing** - a majority of students’ reflection result in mere descriptions of practice and not a critical evaluation or re-framing of their understandings (see e.g. Abou Baker El-Dib, 2007; Lee, 2005; Mena, García, & Tillema, 2011a).
Aims of the study

• This study introduced a **guided reflection procedure** that supports student teachers in developing **knowledge based on their practical experiences** and by linking this with theoretical knowledge.

• The study aimed

  1) to clarify how student teachers experience the guided reflection procedure;

  2) to analyse its perceived effectiveness in the context of supporting student teachers’ practical and research-generated knowledge.
Guided reflection procedure

1. **VIDEO TAPE LESSON**
   - Classroom events

2. **VIDEO TAPEING**
   - Done by student teacher at classroom
   - Focus on teacher’s action

3. **INDEPENDENT REFLECTION**
   - What happens during the lesson?
   - What are the most important incidents (2) for you during the lesson? Why?

4. **INDEPENDENT INCIDENTS**
   - 2 CRITICAL INCIDENTS:
     - Positive, empowering
     - Challenging, difficult
   - Classroom events chosen by the student teacher according to her/his aims for teaching practice

5. **A) INDEPENDENT REFLECTION**
   - What is happening in this incident?
   - Why do you think this is happening?
   - Relating the incident to theory
   - What have you learnt from this process so far?
   - How do you intend to implement these insights in your future teaching?

6. **B) PEER REFLECTION**
   - Written reflection in POFO/REPORT
   - What is happening in this incident?
   - Why do you think this is happening?
   - Relating the incident to theory
   - What have you learnt from this process so far?
   - How do you intend to implement these insights in your future teaching?

**Notes:**
- **max 2 days** for independent reflection
- **max 1 week** for independent reflection

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Method

• Participants: **22 student teachers** (with different prior pedagogical experiences)
• All participants carried out three phases of the guided reflection procedure.
• Data about the student teachers’ experiences with the guided reflection procedure was collected with **six semi-structured group interviews** and **five individual interviews**.
• Data was analysed using a **thematic analysis** (Ryan & Bernard, 2003) method.
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Video viewing</th>
<th>Oral and written reflection</th>
<th>Personal goals for the practice</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Students</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>with prior TE*</td>
<td>1) Helped to observe the recorded lesson as a bystander.</td>
<td>1) Separate stages of reflection contributed to a more profound</td>
<td>1) The procedure helped to consider to what extent the personal goals for practice had been fulfilled.</td>
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<td>2) Helped to notice areas of improvement.</td>
<td>analysis.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2) With each stage new ideas emerged.</td>
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<td><strong>Students</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>with no prior TE*</td>
<td>1) Hard to point out the benefits of video viewing.</td>
<td>1) Hard to point out how the reflection procedure helped.</td>
<td>1) The procedure did not contribute to the fulfilment of personal goals for practice.</td>
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<td>2) Feedback from the supervisor was the most important.</td>
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*TE – teaching experience*
Conclusions and implications for practice

• Depending on their prior teaching experiences, students seem to require different focus and guidance of reflection activities.

• **Survival phase** needs different support.

• The current guided reflection procedure is more beneficial with students with prior pedagogical experiences.
Three condition of support

Oral reflection was carried out in three conditions:

1) independent reflection;
2) peer reflection;
3) reflection with school-mentor

Student teachers consider the reflection with someone to be more useful than an independent reflection.
Thank you!

Äli Leijen, Raili Allas, Auli Toom, Jukka Husu, Juan-José Mena Marcos, Paulien Meijer, Dubravka Knezic, Margus Pedaste, Edgar Krull

E-mail: ali.leijen@ut.ee

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