

From Self-Awareness to Self-Learning: Developing Reflective Competencies of Future Teachers through Simulation Strategies

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Abstract:

The paper explores the development of reflective competencies in future teachers by using simulation strategies as a tool to foster self-awareness and self-directed learning among student teachers, which are crucial for their professional and personal growth. The research aimed to assess the impact of microteaching, as a simulation strategy, on the level of reflective competencies in student teachers. Simulation strategies enable students to recognize their own responses and identify areas for improvement in their approach to learning and teaching practice. The study included 142 students from teacher training programs at Pavol Jozef Šafárik University in Košice and 198 mentor teachers. A custom-designed evaluative questionnaire in the form of a scaled survey, based on autonomous evaluation by student teachers and heteronomous evaluation by mentor teachers, was used to monitor the impact of microteaching as a simulation strategy. The questionnaire's reliability (Cronbach's alpha) was $\alpha=0.803$. In the experimental group, statistically significant differences in reflective competency levels were observed following the implementation of microteaching as a simulation strategy with reflective tools ($p<0.001$). However, in the control group, which engaged in microteaching without reflective tools, no statistically significant difference in reflective competencies was noted. The research findings suggest that simulation strategies not only help future teachers to better understand their strengths and weaknesses but also encourage active personal development, emphasizing the importance of reflective tools. This paper contributes to the discussion on innovative methods in teacher preparation and underscores the need to integrate reflective activities into the educational process.