

DIGITAL PLATFORMS AS CATALYSTS FOR REFLECTIVE PRACTICE IN TEACHER EDUCATION

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Abstract

Reflection is an important component in teacher education to help student teachers improve the quality of their teaching practice. Through reflection, student teachers can identify strengths and weaknesses and activities to improve and enhance their teaching skills. With the development of technology and communication in this digital era, many technology platforms can facilitate the reflection process to be more interactive, documented, and collaborative. This article will theoretically present the reflection process that integrates digital platforms in teacher education implemented through a distance education system. Digital platforms facilitate authentic, meaningful, and impactful learning in teacher education programs to enhance teacher professional growth. With digital platforms, students can conduct structured reflections, share reflections with colleagues and lecturers, obtain direct and ongoing feedback, and build a digital reflection portfolio. Meanwhile, supervising lecturers can use digital platforms to monitor the development of prospective teachers' reflections in real time. By integrating digital reflection into the teacher education curriculum, graduates will have pedagogical self-awareness, strong critical and evaluative thinking skills, and initiative in professional development. In addition, a reflective learning community will also be built.

Keywords: Digital Platform, Reflective Practice, Teacher Education

1 INTRODUCTION

Improving the quality of education in schools is always linked to teacher quality. In other words, improving teacher quality is expected to improve the quality of education in schools. Teachers have very strategic duties, roles, and positions in national development, particularly in the field of education (SDG 4: Quality Education). The position of teachers as professionals serves to enhance their dignity and role as learning agents, which is ultimately expected to improve the quality of national education. Teachers are required to continuously develop and improve their professional skills so that the instruction they undertake will be of higher quality.

The quality of education is reflected in the quality of student learning. In this regard, Hargreaves (2002) argued that if we want to improve student learning, we must improve the teaching process. This statement implies that teachers are required to continually improve and

enhance the quality of their teaching. This aligns with one of the meanings of a professional teacher, namely, being oriented toward the quality of process and results (Soebijanto, 2006). One way teachers can develop and enhance their professional skills is through continuous and ongoing reflection on their teaching. In the context of teacher education, the ability to reflect on teaching is directed toward enhancing teachers' professional skills. This improvement is demonstrated by increased knowledge, understanding of situations, and professional judgment, leading to higher-quality future teaching practices.

Teaching reflection in teacher development programs is one way to improve teacher professionalism. Teaching reflection is directed at developing teachers' professional abilities through critical examination and analysis of learning activities based on existing knowledge and beliefs. Through learning reflection, teachers' knowledge, understanding of situations, and professional considerations will increase and guide future teaching practices. Through teaching reflection activities, it is hoped that the quality of instruction in schools will continue to improve.

The effectiveness of implementing teaching reflection can be increased through the use of digital technology (Bembridge et al., 2025; Spaska, 2025). However, several studies show that the use of digital technology in implementing teaching reflection is still relatively moderate (Alshammari & Alrashidi, 2025); teachers are not familiar with digital technology tools (Chan and Wong, 2021); as well as limited resources, technical difficulties, and emotional challenges during reflection are some of the challenges in utilizing digital technology in implementing teaching reflection (Bembridge et al., 2025).

Given the importance of teaching reflection for teacher development and the low utilization of digital technology in implementing teaching reflection, teachers need assistance and support facilities to facilitate them in conducting teaching reflection using digital technology. Advances in information and communication technology have made various tools available to assist teachers in implementing teaching reflection.

Regarding the importance of reflective teaching skills for improving teachers' professional skills and the quality of instruction by leveraging digital technology, this article will present the definition, benefits, and factors influencing reflective teaching, as well as the use of various digital tools to facilitate and enhance teachers' reflective teaching skills. Based on the literature review, this article will conclude with a presentation on the instruction within

teacher education programs to facilitate the development of reflective teaching skills through the use of digital platforms to strengthen reflective practice.

2 METHODOLOGY

This article is based on a literature review of scientific journal articles examining the nature and importance of teaching reflection and the use of digital technology in planning and implementing teaching reflection. This literature review is expected to provide input as a basis for developing teacher education curricula and instruction that facilitate the implementation of teaching reflection and support teacher education institutions in producing adaptive and innovative teachers in the digital era.

3 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 The Nature of Teaching Reflection

According to Hammerness et al. (2005), teachers should possess adaptive skills in carrying out their duties. These skills are demonstrated by the teacher's ability to implement instruction efficiently by utilizing available resources and the teacher's ability to innovate in developing new strategies to improve the quality of instruction. Furthermore, adaptive skills are also demonstrated by the teacher's ability to make situational decisions when designing instruction and transactional skills during the learning process. In this case, the teacher applies the knowledge and insights he possesses and adapts them to the situation and students he faces. Thus, adaptive teachers are required to make changes or innovations that require leaving routines. Teachers are required to reflect on key ideas and change their beliefs or values and the way they usually implement learning. This idea refers to the concept of reflection.

The use of reflection as a tool to help teachers learn from experience was introduced by John Dewey in 1933. Dewey (Makinster et al., 2006; Bembridge et al., 2025) viewed the concept of reflection as a special form of problem-solving that involves thinking about a problem or issue in a way that aligns with the ideas associated with previous actions. Reflective thinking involves a series of sequential ideas, a defined goal or problem that frames the activity, and a certain amount of personal testing and research. Reflective thinking is a response to a specific problem or situation.

Reflective thinking is the active, sustained, and careful consideration of beliefs or forms of knowledge held to be true in light of the foundations supporting those considerations and the subsequent drawing of conclusions based on those judgments (Cook et al., 2001). Reflection is a way of thinking about educational problems that involves the ability to make rational

choices and accept responsibility for the limitations of those choices (Ross in Ancheson & Gall, 2003).

Reflective thinking has the following dimensions (Killion & Todnem and Makinster et al., 2006; Schon in Peel & Shortland, 2004).

- a. Reflection-on-practice; According to this dimension, reflection is the process of reviewing and analyzing specific teaching experiences and their consequences. In this dimension, intellectual reflection occurs after an action.
- b. Reflection-in-practice; According to this dimension, reflection is related to examining what is planned to be done and using previous knowledge and experience to form a basis for subsequent actions. In this dimension, reflection is a professional thinking process while the action is taking place, using generally known knowledge.
- c. Reflection-for-practice; According to this dimension, reflection occurs while the action is being carried out. Reflection in practice occurs when someone reflects on their learning actions and modifies their learning activities based on the immediate consequences of their actions.

Reflection characteristics (Lee & Tan, 2004; Pollard, 2005).

- a. Examination of practice; Reflection requires testing or evaluating practice. This means that reflection involves testing or evaluating various aspects of teaching practice through introspection. Therefore, teachers need to have skills in classroom action research.
- b. Reflexivity (a reflective awareness); In reflecting on problematic situations, teachers recognize that their beliefs, assumptions, and values influence the situation they face.
- c. A constructive process; Reflection involves proactive thinking and anticipating the situation from the outset. Teachers continuously monitor, assess, and revise learning activities (Novoa-Echaurren et al., 2025).
- d. A process of transformation; Reflective practice should be carried out to transform (change) personal understanding and teaching practices as teachers. Therefore, teachers are required to have an attitude of open-mindedness, responsibility, and sincerity.

Reflection is seen as an educational strategy through developing connections between previous experiences and current situations that integrate a combination of theoretical teaching and clinical practice (Khazaei et al., 2025; Novoa-Echaurren et al., 2025). Teaching reflection is the process of evaluating and reviewing instruction that has been carried out to interpret or analyze what has been done (Gortzen et al., 2025; Khazaei et al., 2025).

From various opinions about reflection, it can be stated that, simply put, teaching reflection can be defined as the activity of contemplating or remembering and connecting teaching performance that has been, is being, or will be implemented in instruction and considering the consequences of the actions taken. Reflection is the process of reviewing teaching actions that have been implemented or making connections between instruction that has been implemented and that which will be implemented and their impact on the process and outcomes of student learning. Reflection involves examining and considering various aspects of the instructional process through introspection. Indicators of reflection are critical and analytical thinking in facing and overcoming situations.

3.2 The Role of Reflection in Teacher Professional Development

In the context of teacher education, reflection is directed at enhancing teacher professionalism. This improvement is demonstrated by increased knowledge, understanding of situations, and professional judgment, leading to high-quality future teaching practices. The process of reflection bridges the gap between theory and practice, adjusting prior beliefs about theory and practice, and reconstructing professional knowledge from situational knowledge (Browne & Dugmore, 2002; Spaska, 2002; Toh, n.d.). Therefore, reflection activities should strive to transform one's understanding and practice as a teacher.

Teaching reflection not only helps teachers identify, analyze, and address instructional problems but also builds teachers' personal understanding of teaching (Lee & Tan, 2004). Through teaching reflection, teachers can develop and enhance professional skills. Reflection helps enhance professional growth and development, critical thinking, self-evaluation, and independent learning (Osterman & Kottkamp in College of St. Benedict & St. John's University, 2008; Spaska, 2002).

Reflection helps teachers select and sort through ideas, confront and test new concepts about learning and teaching, and identify their influence on instructional decision-making. Thus, reflection is a tool to help teachers engage in lifelong learning and professional growth. Research by Alshammary1 & Alrashidi (2025) shows that teachers have a positive attitude toward the importance of teaching reflection because it helps teachers explain and categorize activities in the instructional process, gain new ideas about teaching, identify strengths and weaknesses, and encourage better learning evaluation and planning, which ultimately can improve and/or enhance the quality of instruction. Through teaching reflection, teachers

systematically evaluate the instructional process that has been carried out to produce positive solutions to the challenges faced.

Reflection is key for teachers to think critically about teaching strategies and skills in their given context, examine the impact of these behaviors on students, and examine subsequent behaviors in similar contexts (Lorson et al., 2007). Through reflection, teachers develop context-specific theories that can advance understanding and action and provide a foundation for subsequent instructional activities (Makinster et al., 2006). Teaching reflection enables teachers to develop competencies in creating culturally appropriate learning environments and experiences (Mensah et al., 2025). Teaching reflection aims to develop meaningful and in-depth learning processes (Khazaei et al., 2025; Mirzaei et al., 2025; Rozimela et al., 2025). Teaching reflection facilitates the development of thoughtful teachers in the classroom, who actively participate in school reform, collaborate with others in a teaching community, adapt continuously to the changing demands of a diverse student population, and possess the skills and mindset to continuously learn and grow as teachers.

3.3 Factors Influencing Teaching Reflection

Reflection is seen as a goal in various teacher education programs. Therefore, teachers are required to develop and improve their ability to reflect on teaching. To help teachers implement reflection effectively, it is necessary to identify factors that can support and hinder its implementation. Four factors influence the success of reflection practice (Lee & Tan, 2004).

3.3.1 Teacher Characteristics

Teachers are the ones who conduct teaching reflection. Therefore, teacher characteristics will greatly influence the implementation of teaching reflection. There are five basic skills needed to be able to conduct effective teaching reflection: self-awareness, description, critical analysis, synthesis, and evaluation (Gortzen et al., 2025; Mirzaei et al., 2025). In addition, to be able to conduct effective teaching reflection, teachers are required to have the characteristics of an open mind, responsibility, and acting wholeheartedly (Alshammari & Amrashidi, 2025). By considering these basic skills, teacher characteristics that influence learning reflection include ability (Pultorak, 1996; Taylor & Valli, 1992); self-confidence, attitude, and readiness to conduct reflection (Lee & Tan, 2004; Alshammari & Amrashidi, 2025); self-efficacy (Ananda, 2003); and instructional orientation, age, gender, and previous education (Korthagen, 1993).

3.3.2 Interpersonal Context

Professional growth through teaching reflection will be successful if teachers receive competent professional assistance and support from colleagues or superiors acting as supervisors (principals or supervisors). Peer groups are communities of practice where teachers can share knowledge, learn together, and apply various ideas in instruction (Alshammari & Amrashidi, 2025; Choi, 2006; Hung et al., 2005; Segal, 2024; Wang et al., 2025). Teacher involvement in communities of practice can help teachers improve their ability to build knowledge based on specific problems they face and the ideas of other teachers. Teachers will learn better and more easily when they are in a community. In addition to colleagues, supervisor assistance in the clinical supervision process encourages teachers to reflect on teaching (Toh, 2001). The absence of expert assistance, support, and opportunities can hinder teachers from reflecting on learning (Lowery, 2003). Supervisors are key individuals who have a direct influence on teachers in implementing teaching reflection. Without encouragement and an intensive role from supervisors to engage in reflection, reflective practice tends to be at a low level. Principals and educational supervisors need to foster a culture that encourages teachers to recognize the importance of implementing reflective teaching (Alshammari & Alrashidi, 2025).

3.3.3 Curriculum and Instructional Context

This context relates to the curriculum and instruction in teacher training institutions. All parties involved in teacher training programs, both from higher education institutions and teaching practice settings, should have a shared understanding of the concept and practice of reflection. A lack of clarity regarding the concept of reflection on teaching among various parties involved in teacher training will hinder the desired teaching reflection. The success of educational programs is demonstrated by the integration of reflection on instructions at all levels, from basic knowledge of reflection on learning to the practice of reflection on learning (Spaska, 2025).

3.3.4 Values, Norms, and Culture/Institutions

Implementing a program that emphasizes reflection requires a major paradigm shift, both by teacher educators, school teachers, and student teachers. Reflective learning practices will be implemented optimally if all parties involved recognize the importance of reflective teaching skills for teachers. In teaching practice at school, students have two distinct roles: as teachers and as students. As teachers, students are required to implement instructions in accordance

with the demands of the school curriculum. This encourages students to implement instruction that enables the achievement of curriculum targets. If this becomes the primary focus of students, reflective practice cannot be implemented optimally. However, if schools provide opportunities for students to test their ideas in the classroom, they are respecting their role as learners. Students can develop internal criteria that empower them to learn and think for themselves, so that the focus of reflection on teaching is on the learning process, not the teaching process.

3.4 Utilization of Digital Technology to Improve the Quality of Teaching Reflection

Many methods can be used to help improve teachers' ability to reflect on teaching, including classroom action research, peer-to-peer group activities, reflective journaling, and clinical supervision. Developments in digital technology have the potential to facilitate effective reflection on teaching. Online journals, blogs, e-portfolios, and multimedia, accessible anytime, enable teachers to reflect on teaching more frequently and comprehensively. Meanwhile, online forums, YouTube, and group social media allow teachers to share knowledge and experiences during the reflection process with colleagues, principals, educational supervisors, and experts or the broader teacher community (Alshammari & Alrashidi, 2025). Digital technology has the potential to provide real-time feedback and more individualized learning experiences, as well as opportunities for collaborative reflection (Bembridge et al., 2025; Spaska, 2025).

Conducting classroom action research is one way teachers can develop and enhance their professional skills sustainably. Classroom action research can be a vehicle for enhancing their ability to reflect on teaching. By conducting classroom action research, teachers are required to reflect on their instructional activities in order to improve the quality of the instructional process and student learning outcomes. Through classroom action research, teachers critically and systematically assess the assumptions, objectives, and approaches applied in instruction (Darling-Hammond et al., 2005). By utilizing technology, planning and implementing teaching reflection can be done based on data. Applications of teaching analytics in teaching reflection are believed to support informed decision-making and facilitate data-based teaching reflection (Lee et al., 2024). By utilizing teaching analytics applications, teachers can gain new information and data-based insights that enhance their understanding of their teaching practices and support continuous improvement to facilitate teaching reflection (Wang et al., 2025).

Utilizing peer groups (communities of practice) can help improve teachers' ability to reflect on teaching. The instructional process occurs when students actively participate socially in their environment (Milbrandt et al., 2004). Teachers learn better when they are in a community that provides opportunities for dialogue and action. By actively participating in sharing, discussing, and debating, teachers not only receive assistance in solving instructional problems they face but also help them build knowledge based on the specific problems they face and the ideas of other teachers (Choi, 2006; Hung et al., 2005).

Additionally, within professional communities, teachers can engage in collaborative reflection in online discussion forums. Collaborative teaching reflection refers to the process of reflective teaching practices undertaken by a group of teachers to analyze and improve professional activities (Alshammari & Amrashidi, 2025; Segal, 2024; Wang et al., 2025). Sharing activities using digital technology during the teaching reflection process can generate valuable insights into changes in teaching practice, challenges faced, and areas for improvement, while also providing a support network that enhances the reflection process (Alshammari & Amrashidi, 2025).

Writing journals serves as a reflective bridge that allows teachers to think, consider, and question educational practices and policies (Chitpin, 2006). To write journals is a popular method of critical reflection used in both pre-service and in-service teacher education to encourage students to critically examine their beliefs, values, and experiences (Browne & Dugmore, 2025). Reflective journaling is a tool for encouraging metacognitive thinking and documenting knowledge construction, offering a structured space for students to articulate their instructional process. Reflective journals act as scaffolds and catalysts for peer feedback (Browne & Dugmore, 2025).

Effective teaching reflection requires a systematic approach, where core skills are developed early in education and case study analysis is emphasized later in the educational process. A balance between technology use and real-world situations in schools ensures that the integration of digital technology into teaching reflection provides a synergistic teaching experience. Integrating digital technology into teaching reflection is the most effective strategy for assisting teachers in reflecting on their teaching. Electronic portfolios, automated reflection analysis, virtual case simulations, and interactive platforms provide tools that encourage personalized professional development for teachers, leading to greater adaptability.

The use of e-portfolios for teaching reflection allows teachers to record and analyze their teaching experiences in a structured manner (Spaska, 2025).

4 CONCLUSION

To prepare adaptive and innovative teachers, teacher education institutions need to equip students with the ability and skills of teaching reflection. Through teaching reflection, student-teachers are expected to be able to evaluate and review their teaching performance that has been, is being, or will be implemented and its impact on the process and student learning outcomes to continuously improve and/or enhance the quality of instruction. The use of digital technology can increase the effectiveness of teaching reflection. By considering the potential and development of digital technology, teacher development and coaching strategies by optimizing the use of digital platforms to train teaching reflection skills should pay attention to students' digital literacy. In addition, the teacher education curriculum should provide a field of study on teaching reflection and a teaching process that integrates digital platforms in teacher education programs to carry out teaching reflection practices.

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