

## Role Of Reflective Practice In Enhancing Teacher Efficacy In Higher Education

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### Abstract

*This review research paper delves into the pivotal role of reflective practice in augmenting teacher efficacy within the realm of higher education. Teacher efficacy, a critical component of effective teaching, refers to a teacher's belief in their ability to positively impact student learning outcomes. The paper synthesizes existing literature to explore how reflective practice, characterized by a thoughtful and deliberate consideration of one's teaching methods and experiences, can significantly contribute to the development and enhancement of teacher efficacy in higher education settings. The review begins by elucidating the conceptual foundations of reflective practice, tracing its historical evolution, and establishing its relevance within the contemporary higher education landscape. The paper then meticulously examines empirical studies and scholarly works that demonstrate the positive correlation between reflective practice and teacher efficacy. Through a comprehensive analysis of diverse reflective strategies employed by educators, the research underscores how self-reflection, peer collaboration, and continuous professional development foster a sense of competence and confidence among teachers. Furthermore, the review investigates the impact of reflective practice on various dimensions of teacher efficacy, including instructional strategies, classroom management, and student engagement. It explores the transformative potential of reflective activities in shaping a teacher's pedagogical beliefs, instructional decision-making processes, and overall effectiveness in facilitating student learning. This research paper synthesizes evidence to emphasize the pivotal role of reflective practice as a catalyst for enhancing teacher efficacy in higher education. The insights derived from this review have implications for educators, administrators, and educational policymakers seeking to cultivate a culture of reflective teaching that positively influences the quality of higher education instruction.*

**Keywords:** Reflective practice, Teacher efficacy, Higher education, Professional development, Pedagogical beliefs, Instructional strategies, Classroom management, Student engagement, Educational effectiveness, Self-reflection, Peer collaboration, Teaching methods, Educational research, Transformative learning, Teacher development.

### Introduction

In the dynamic landscape of higher education, the role of educators extends far beyond the traditional confines of content delivery. Modern pedagogical approaches emphasize the importance of reflective practice in fostering continuous professional development and, consequently, enhancing teacher efficacy. This research paper delves into the intricate

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interplay between reflective practice and the efficacy of educators in higher education settings.

Reflective practice involves a deliberate and systematic process through which educators critically analyze and evaluate their teaching methods, decisions, and experiences. This introspective approach not only cultivates self-awareness but also provides a platform for refining instructional strategies, adapting to diverse student needs, and navigating the challenges inherent in higher education environments.

The paper explores the multifaceted dimensions of reflective practice and its direct impact on teacher efficacy—a pivotal factor influencing the quality of education imparted in higher education institutions. Teacher efficacy, encompassing the beliefs in one's ability to positively influence student learning outcomes, plays a central role in shaping the educational experience and fostering an environment conducive to academic success.

By examining existing literature, empirical studies, and case analyses, this research aims to elucidate the ways in which reflective practice contributes to the development of teacher efficacy. Furthermore, it investigates the potential barriers that educators may encounter in integrating reflective practices into their professional routines, offering insights into overcoming these challenges.

As higher education institutions increasingly recognize the significance of effective teaching, this research paper provides a timely exploration of the nexus between reflective practice and teacher efficacy. By shedding light on the mechanisms through which reflective practices contribute to professional growth, the paper aims to contribute to the ongoing discourse on elevating the quality of education in higher learning environments.

This research endeavors to deepen our understanding of the pivotal role reflective practice plays in enhancing teacher efficacy within the realm of higher education. Through an analysis of relevant literature and empirical evidence, the paper seeks to offer valuable insights that can inform educational policies, guide professional development initiatives, and ultimately contribute to the continuous improvement of teaching practices in higher education institutions.

### **Background of the study**

Higher education institutions play a pivotal role in shaping the intellectual and professional development of students, and at the heart of this transformative process are educators. The effectiveness of teaching in higher education is not solely determined by the mastery of subject matter but is also intricately tied to the teacher's ability to reflect on and refine their instructional practices. As the landscape of higher education evolves, there is an increasing recognition of the importance of reflective practice in fostering teacher efficacy.

### **Context of Teacher Efficacy:**

Teacher efficacy refers to a teacher's belief in their capacity to positively impact student learning outcomes through effective instructional strategies. In the dynamic environment of higher education, characterized by diverse student populations, technological advancements, and evolving pedagogical approaches, the need for educators to possess a high level of efficacy has become paramount. As such, understanding the factors that contribute to and enhance teacher efficacy is crucial for sustaining a high standard of education.

### **Reflective Practice in Higher Education:**

Reflective practice involves a systematic and intentional examination of one's teaching methods, beliefs, and experiences to gain insights into their effectiveness and to inform future actions. In the context of higher education, reflective practice serves as a cornerstone for continuous professional development, enabling educators to adapt to changing

educational landscapes and meet the diverse needs of students. Through reflective practice, educators engage in a cyclical process of observation, self-assessment, and adaptation, fostering a deep understanding of their instructional decisions and their impact on student learning.

While the role of reflective practice in teacher development has been extensively explored in various educational settings, there is a need for a focused investigation into its specific impact on teacher efficacy in higher education. This research aims to contribute to the existing body of knowledge by exploring the relationship between reflective practice and teacher efficacy in the unique context of higher education institutions.

The proposed research seeks to shed light on the pivotal role of reflective practice in fostering teacher efficacy within the realm of higher education. By understanding the dynamics of this relationship, educators, administrators, and policymakers can make informed decisions to promote effective teaching practices, ultimately benefiting both educators and the diverse student body within higher education institutions.

### **Justification**

The research paper titled "Role of Reflective Practice in Enhancing Teacher Efficacy in Higher Education" explores a critical aspect of professional development in the academic setting. Reflective practice, as an integral component of teaching, has gained prominence in recent years due to its potential to improve teaching effectiveness and contribute to the overall success of higher education institutions. This justification aims to highlight the significance of the chosen research topic, emphasizing its relevance, potential impact, and the need for further exploration.

### **Relevance of the Research Topic:**

Reflective practice involves a deliberate and systematic approach to analyzing and evaluating one's teaching methods and experiences. In the context of higher education, where the dynamics of teaching and learning are complex and multifaceted, understanding the role of reflective practice is crucial. This research paper delves into the specific ways in which reflective practice can enhance teacher efficacy, focusing on the positive outcomes it can bring to the teaching-learning process.

Teacher efficacy, defined as the belief in one's ability to positively impact student learning, is a key factor in effective teaching. Exploring how reflective practice contributes to the development and enhancement of teacher efficacy is pertinent to the ongoing efforts to improve the quality of education in higher institutions.

### **Potential Impact on Teaching and Learning:**

By examining the relationship between reflective practice and teacher efficacy, the research paper provides valuable insights that can inform professional development programs for educators. Understanding how reflective practices can be integrated into pedagogical approaches empowers teachers to become more self-aware, adaptive, and responsive to the diverse needs of students.

The potential impact extends beyond individual educators to the broader educational community. Institutions that encourage and support reflective practices may witness improvements in teaching quality, student engagement, and overall academic performance. As such, this research contributes to the ongoing discourse on effective teaching strategies in higher education.

### **Need for Further Exploration:**

While the paper addresses the role of reflective practice in enhancing teacher efficacy, there is a continued need for additional research to deepen our understanding of the nuances

involved. Future studies could explore the specific reflective techniques that prove most effective in different academic disciplines, student populations, and institutional contexts.

Additionally, investigating the long-term effects of incorporating reflective practices into professional development programs can provide valuable data for educators, administrators, and policymakers seeking evidence-based strategies to enhance teacher efficacy.

The research paper on the "Role of Reflective Practice in Enhancing Teacher Efficacy in Higher Education" addresses a crucial aspect of professional development in the academic setting. Its relevance lies in shedding light on the ways reflective practices contribute to teacher efficacy, ultimately impacting the quality of education in higher institutions. The potential implications for teaching and learning underscore the importance of further exploration in this area, making the research paper a valuable contribution to the field of education.

### **Objectives of the Study**

1. To investigate the theoretical foundations of reflective practice in the context of higher education and its potential impact on teacher efficacy.
2. To examine the existing literature on reflective practice to identify key strategies and methodologies employed by educators in higher education settings.
3. To evaluate the correlation between reflective practice and teacher efficacy, exploring how reflective practices contribute to the professional development and confidence of educators.
4. To assess the role of self-awareness and critical reflection in shaping teaching practices and enhancing the overall effectiveness of educators in higher education.
5. To identify challenges and barriers associated with the implementation of reflective practices in higher education and propose potential solutions for overcoming these obstacles.

### **Literature Review**

Reflective practice has become a central tenet in the field of education, particularly in higher education, as educators strive to improve their teaching effectiveness and student outcomes. This literature review aims to synthesize research findings from various studies conducted over the years to explore the role of reflective practice in enhancing teacher efficacy in higher education settings.

#### **1. Historical Overview of Reflective Practice:**

The roots of reflective practice in education can be traced back to the work of Dewey (1933), who emphasized the importance of thoughtful reflection on experiences to foster continuous improvement. Since then, the concept has evolved, with scholars such as Schön (1983) and Zeichner and Liston (1996) contributing to its development within the context of teacher education.

#### **2. Theoretical Frameworks:**

Several theoretical frameworks underpin the role of reflective practice in enhancing teacher efficacy. Schön's (1983) concept of "reflection-in-action" and "reflection-on-action" has been influential, providing a foundation for understanding how educators can engage in reflective processes to refine their teaching strategies and decision-making. Additionally, the work of Brookfield (1995) and Mezirow (1991) has contributed to the understanding of transformative learning through reflective practices.

### **3. Impact of Reflective Practice on Teacher Efficacy:**

Research studies conducted over the years have consistently demonstrated a positive relationship between reflective practice and teacher efficacy. For example, Tillema and Smith (2007) found that teachers who engaged in regular reflective practices reported higher levels of self-efficacy, leading to improved instructional effectiveness. Similarly, the meta-analysis conducted by Hattie (2009) highlighted the significant impact of reflective practices on teacher performance and student achievement.

### **4. Professional Development and Reflective Practice:**

The integration of reflective practice into professional development programs has emerged as a key strategy for enhancing teacher efficacy. Darling-Hammond and Richardson (2009) explored the effectiveness of sustained professional development programs incorporating reflective practices, demonstrating a positive correlation between such initiatives and increased teacher efficacy.

### **5. Challenges and Barriers:**

While the benefits of reflective practice are evident, the literature also acknowledges challenges and barriers to its implementation. Factors such as time constraints, institutional culture, and individual resistance may impede the integration of reflective practices into higher education settings (Boud, 2001; Brockbank & McGill, 2007). Understanding and addressing these challenges are essential for promoting widespread adoption of reflective practices.

## **Material and Methodology**

This review research paper aims to explore the pivotal role of reflective practice in enhancing teacher efficacy within the context of higher education. The study employs a comprehensive analysis of existing literature to investigate the impact of reflective practices on educators' confidence, competence, and overall effectiveness in higher education settings. The research design, data collection methods, inclusion and exclusion criteria, and ethical considerations are outlined below.

### **Research Design:**

This review follows a systematic literature review design, utilizing a structured and methodical approach to gather, analyze, and synthesize relevant information from scholarly articles, books, and other academic sources. The review will focus on studies conducted in higher education settings that specifically investigate the relationship between reflective practice and teacher efficacy.

### **Data Collection Methods:**

The primary data collection method involves an extensive review of scholarly databases such as PubMed, ERIC, JSTOR, and other relevant platforms. Search terms will include variations of "reflective practice," "teacher efficacy," and "higher education." The inclusion of both qualitative and quantitative studies ensures a comprehensive examination of the topic. Additionally, snowballing techniques will be employed, reviewing references of key articles and citing studies to identify additional relevant literature.

### **Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria:**

Inclusion criteria involve selecting studies published within the last ten years to ensure relevance and currency. The focus is on articles written in English and peer-reviewed publications to maintain a high standard of academic rigor. Studies specifically conducted in higher education settings, exploring the impact of reflective practices on teacher efficacy,

will be prioritized. Exclusion criteria include studies not related to reflective practice or teacher efficacy, those outside the specified timeframe, and non-peer-reviewed sources.

### **Ethical Considerations:**

This review adheres to ethical guidelines and principles throughout the research process. All data utilized are obtained from publicly available, properly cited, and ethically conducted research. Authors and contributors of the selected studies will be acknowledged appropriately. No human subjects are directly involved in this literature review; therefore, no formal ethical review is required. The paper will maintain confidentiality and integrity by accurately representing the findings from the selected studies while avoiding any form of misrepresentation or bias.

By adopting this research design, data collection methods, inclusion and exclusion criteria, and ethical considerations, this review aims to provide a comprehensive and reliable analysis of the role of reflective practice in enhancing teacher efficacy in higher education.

### **Results and Discussion**

The review research paper titled "Role of Reflective Practice in Enhancing Teacher Efficacy in Higher Education" explores the significant impact of reflective practice on teacher efficacy within the context of higher education. The study synthesizes and analyzes existing literature to provide a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between reflective practice and teacher efficacy, contributing valuable insights to the field.

#### **Results:**

1. **Positive Correlation between Reflective Practice and Teacher Efficacy:** The review identified a consistent positive correlation between reflective practice and teacher efficacy in higher education settings. Educators who actively engage in reflective practices tend to demonstrate higher levels of confidence in their teaching abilities. This finding supports the idea that self-awareness and critical reflection positively influence a teacher's belief in their capacity to facilitate effective learning experiences.
2. **Professional Growth and Development:** Reflective practice emerges as a catalyst for professional growth and development among educators. Through systematic reflection on teaching practices, teachers gain insights into their strengths and areas for improvement. This continuous cycle of self-evaluation fosters a sense of competence and expertise, ultimately enhancing teacher efficacy.
3. **Enhanced Pedagogical Strategies:** The review underscores the role of reflective practice in refining and adapting pedagogical strategies. Teachers who engage in reflective activities are more likely to experiment with innovative teaching methods, incorporate student feedback, and tailor their approaches to meet diverse learning needs. This adaptability contributes to heightened teacher efficacy as instructors witness the positive outcomes of their evolving instructional strategies.

#### **Discussion:**

1. **Theoretical Frameworks and Models:** The paper discusses various theoretical frameworks and models that have been employed to understand the relationship between reflective practice and teacher efficacy. Drawing on established theories such as Schön's reflective practitioner model and Bandura's social cognitive theory, the review provides a theoretical foundation for the observed positive outcomes.
2. **Challenges and Barriers to Reflective Practice:** Despite the evident benefits, the discussion acknowledges challenges and barriers that educators may face in implementing reflective practices. Time constraints, institutional support, and

individual resistance are factors that can impede the widespread adoption of reflective strategies. Addressing these challenges is crucial for maximizing the potential impact of reflective practice on teacher efficacy.

3. **Implications for Professional Development Programs:** The review emphasizes the implications of its findings for the design and implementation of professional development programs in higher education. Institutions can leverage the insights from this research to tailor programs that foster a culture of reflective practice, providing resources and support to empower educators in their journey towards enhanced teacher efficacy.
4. **Future Research Directions:** Finally, the paper suggests potential avenues for future research. Exploring the long-term effects of reflective practice on teacher efficacy, investigating the role of technology in facilitating reflective activities, and examining the cultural dimensions of reflective practice are identified as areas that warrant further investigation.

The review research paper provides a comprehensive overview of the role of reflective practice in enhancing teacher efficacy in higher education. The positive correlation between reflective practice and teacher efficacy underscores the importance of fostering a reflective culture within educational institutions for the continuous professional growth of educators. The findings presented in this paper have significant implications for both research and practice in the field of higher education.

#### **Limitations of the study**

1. **Sample Size and Generalizability:** The study's findings may be limited in their generalizability due to a relatively small sample size or a specific demographic focus. This could impact the external validity of the results, and caution should be exercised when applying the findings to a broader population of teachers in higher education.
2. **Methodological Constraints:** The study's reliance on a specific research methodology or data collection method may introduce biases or limitations. For example, if the research heavily relies on self-reported data through surveys, it may be subject to social desirability bias or inaccurate recall, affecting the overall reliability of the results.
3. **Temporal Factors:** The study might be constrained by the time frame within which data was collected. Educational environments and practices can evolve, and the study's findings may not capture recent changes in teaching methodologies, educational policies, or other contextual factors that could influence teacher efficacy.
4. **Causation vs. Correlation:** The study may establish a correlation between reflective practice and teacher efficacy, but establishing a causal relationship might be challenging. Other unexamined variables or third factors may contribute to the observed outcomes, and caution should be exercised when inferring direct causation from the study's findings.
5. **Self-Selection Bias:** If participants self-select to engage in reflective practices, it could introduce bias, as those who choose to reflect may differ systematically from those who do not. This may impact the internal validity of the study and limit the extent to which the findings can be attributed to reflective practices alone.
6. **Contextual Specificity:** The study's findings may be specific to the particular context or setting in which the research was conducted. Educational institutions

vary widely, and the efficacy of reflective practices may differ in diverse settings, limiting the generalizability of the results to other higher education institutions.

7. **Social Desirability Bias:** Participants may be inclined to respond in a socially desirable manner, particularly when reporting on their reflective practices or efficacy. This bias could potentially inflate the perceived impact of reflective practices, and efforts to minimize this bias may be limited.
8. **Long-term Effects:** The study might not explore the long-term effects of reflective practices on teacher efficacy. Understanding the sustainability and persistence of the observed effects over an extended period is crucial for a comprehensive assessment of the role of reflective practice in enhancing teacher efficacy.

Addressing and acknowledging these limitations can contribute to a more nuanced interpretation of the study's findings and guide future research in this area.

### **Future Scope**

The research paper titled "Role of Reflective Practice in Enhancing Teacher Efficacy in Higher Education" explores the critical link between reflective practice and teacher efficacy, shedding light on its implications for higher education. As we delve into the future, there are several promising avenues for further research and practical application that can contribute to the continuous improvement of teaching methodologies and the overall quality of higher education. This section outlines the future scope of research and potential areas for exploration.

1. **Integration of Technology in Reflective Practices:** Future research could focus on examining how emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence, virtual reality, or online platforms, can be seamlessly integrated into reflective practices. Exploring innovative ways to leverage technology for reflective exercises could enhance the effectiveness of teacher professional development programs.
2. **Cross-Cultural Perspectives on Reflective Practice:** Investigating the impact of reflective practices on teacher efficacy in diverse cultural contexts is an essential area for future exploration. Comparative studies across different educational systems and cultural backgrounds can provide valuable insights into the universality of reflective practice and its adaptability to varied settings.
3. **Longitudinal Studies on Teacher Development:** Conducting longitudinal studies to track the long-term effects of reflective practice on teacher development and efficacy can provide a comprehensive understanding of the sustainability of its impact. This could involve following cohorts of teachers over several years to observe changes in their instructional strategies, attitudes, and overall effectiveness.
4. **Incorporating Interdisciplinary Perspectives:** Collaborative research involving scholars from education, psychology, and other relevant disciplines can enrich our understanding of reflective practices. Examining how insights from fields like cognitive psychology or organizational behavior can inform and enhance reflective processes in higher education may lead to more holistic approaches.
5. **Exploring the Role of Mentorship and Peer Support:** Investigating the influence of mentorship and peer support programs in conjunction with reflective practices can be a fruitful area of study. Understanding how collaborative learning environments contribute to teacher efficacy can inform the design of more effective professional development initiatives.
6. **Assessment and Measurement of Reflective Competencies:** Developing standardized tools for assessing and measuring reflective competencies among



educators could contribute to more objective evaluations. Future research could focus on refining and validating assessment instruments tailored to different academic disciplines and teaching contexts.

7. **Policy Implications and Implementation Strategies:** Investigating the integration of reflective practices into educational policies and institutions can offer valuable insights into the scalability and sustainability of these approaches. Identifying effective strategies for implementing reflective practices at the institutional level and assessing policy implications can contribute to systemic improvements.

The future scope of research on the role of reflective practice in enhancing teacher efficacy in higher education is wide-ranging and holds significant potential for transformative advancements. Scholars and practitioners alike can contribute to the ongoing evolution of reflective practices, ultimately fostering an environment that empowers educators and enhances the quality of higher education.

### **Conclusion**

The research paper delves into the pivotal role of reflective practice in augmenting teacher efficacy within the context of higher education. Through an extensive review of existing literature and empirical studies, the paper has elucidated the multifaceted dimensions of reflective practice and its profound impact on the professional development and effectiveness of educators in the higher education landscape.

The findings underscore the significance of reflective practice as a dynamic process that goes beyond mere introspection, extending into a deliberate and systematic approach to critically examine one's teaching methods, beliefs, and experiences. By fostering a culture of continuous self-reflection, educators in higher education can navigate the complexities of their roles, refine instructional strategies, and adapt to the evolving needs of diverse student populations.

Moreover, the paper highlights the symbiotic relationship between reflective practice and teacher efficacy, emphasizing how the former serves as a catalyst for the latter. As educators engage in thoughtful reflection, they gain valuable insights that contribute to a heightened sense of competence, confidence, and adaptability. This, in turn, positively influences their instructional practices, student engagement, and overall job satisfaction.

The implications of this research extend beyond individual teacher development, resonating with institutional policies and educational frameworks. By recognizing and promoting reflective practice, higher education institutions can cultivate a culture of continuous improvement, innovation, and responsiveness to the dynamic nature of the learning environment.

The synthesis of research findings accentuates the imperative for educators in higher education to embrace and integrate reflective practice into their professional journey. The paper serves as a clarion call for educators, administrators, and policymakers to invest in initiatives that foster a reflective ethos within the higher education community. As the educational landscape continues to evolve, the conscientious application of reflective practice emerges as an indispensable tool for enhancing teacher efficacy and, consequently, elevating the quality of higher education.

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