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Talking about doing – towards a performative pedagogy in teacher education

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Abstract: In this article, I present performativity as a theoretical framework for linking practical action and reflection in teacher education. Performativity, in essence, is a theoretical concept signifying staging, design and co-creation of social and pedagogical actions. Through systematic analyses of a selection of research literature I identify and connect two contrasting performative perspectives with distinct understandings of how pedagogical actions can best be explored and reflected upon. One perspective originates from what I call *performative education* and prioritises identification and development of collective and articulated practices within a profession, such as methods, routines and the use of specific techniques or resources. The other perspective stems from what I call *performative teaching*. Here, the emphasis is placed on dynamic, aesthetic, and relational actions that are produced by all agents involved in the learning processes. The study is a theoretical contribution to teaching and research on practical actions and skills in teacher education.

Keywords: performative, performativity, teaching, teacher education, performative pedagogy

Sammendrag: I denne artikkelen presenterer jeg performativitet som et teoretisk rammeverk for å utforske undervisning som kan bidra til å kople handling og refleksjon i lærerutdanningen. Performativitet er et teoretisk konsept som dreier seg om å beskrive eller forklare hvordan handlinger formgis og samskapes i sosiale og pedagogiske kontekster. Gjennom systematiske analyser av et utvalg forskningslitteratur identifiserer og sammenstiller jeg to performative perspektiver som uttrykker ulike forståelser av hvordan pedagogiske handlinger best kan utforskes og reflekteres over. Ett perspektiv stammer fra det jeg kaller *performativ utdanning* og handler om kollektive og artikulerte praksiser innenfor en profesjon, som for eksempel metoder, rutiner og bruk av spesifikke teknikker eller ressurser. Det andre perspektivet stammer fra det jeg kaller *performativ undervisning*. Her legges det vekt på dynamiske, estetiske og relasjonelle handlinger som samskapes i lokale utdanningskontekster. Studien er et teoretisk bidrag til undervisning og forskning på praktiske handlinger og ferdigheter i lærerutdanningen.

Nøkkelord: performativ, performativitet, undervisning, lærerutdanning, performativ pedagogikk

Introduction

Let me start with a brief description of a situation from teacher education: *A teacher educator is standing in the middle of the classroom. She rests her gaze briefly on each preservice teacher, makes contact, smiles and waits. 'It's nice to see everyone', she says.* This is how the teacher educator starts a lesson. It is an everyday situation. Even though the teacher educator intends to use space, body, voice, and language in specific ways, it is uncertain whether her actions are carried out as expected. What we do know is that the way actions are designed and staged, and how they work together with social and pedagogical norms and classroom rules, has great significance for how they influence, involve and impact the preservice teacher (Gasparatou, 2017).

This study examines how the performative perspective can be used as a practical and reflective framework for exploring and expressing pedagogical actions in teacher education.

Previous (performatively oriented) studies have, to a limited extent, adopted performative perspectives to connect actions with aesthetic qualities to more strategic and collective actions within the teaching profession. In this study, I make a systematic analysis of a selection of research literature to explore performativity as a potential theoretical reflection framework to explore practical actions in the teaching profession. I synthesise recent performative research articles to derive new theory that can be used to explore a wide range of forms of actions, such as leading whole-class discussions, starting a teaching session, or framing exploratory and creative teaching activities. By synthesising different performative research, I am working towards a performative pedagogy that can be used to explore tensions and connections between actions, language and ontology within the teaching profession.

In teacher education, performativity is linked to the level of action and practice in training (Møller-Skau & Lindstøl, 2022; Schewe, 2020). Legislation and course curricula in and across subjects describe learning outcomes that deal with practical skills, such as *how to start a maths lesson* and *how to give feedback that facilitates learning*. Although actions and skills are described in governance documents, it is still up to every teacher training programme to determine how teaching is taught (Grossman et al., 2018; Smith, 2021).

In research on teacher educators' teaching, it is recommended that practical training is linked to theoretical reflection, where preservice teachers

practise using professional language to reflect on practical examples (Lindstøl, 2018).

To develop new knowledge about a profession is a matter of exploring bases of knowledge, professional identities and that which is executed – and done – by way of different practices (Molander & Terum, 2008, p. 19). The term ‘profession’ comes from the Greek *prophaino*, meaning ‘to declare publicly’ (Eriksen & Molander, 2008, p. 161). To describe an occupation as a ‘profession’ expresses expectations of a collective and articulated identity rooted in practices and actions.

In order to investigate tensions between local and more collective strategies for professional development, there is a need for a flexible and nuanced language that is closely connected to the practices that are executed. In this study, I explore performative theory, which can be used both to develop, explore and analyse empirical practices. I take Janek Szatkowski’s (2011, p. 3) definition as my starting point: ‘Performativity is a method of observation that brings into focus phenomena as things that come into being and have meaning at one and the same time’ (my translation).

That an action ‘comes into being and has meaning at one and the same time’ does not indicate that I am looking to interpret actions as *signs* that represent *a single meaning*, but that I am exploring what actions *do* and how they gain different meanings through different forms of collaborative processes. I ask: *How can different performative perspectives be used as a theoretical reflection framework to explore and strengthen teaching and research on practical skills and actions in teacher education?*

I begin by introducing the term ‘performativity’, a term that is not easily defined.

Co-creating meaning through action

The terms *performative* and *performativity* stem from linguistic and philosophical theory; they are about how language not only describes a condition but also performs an action and creates meaning when interacting with participants in social situations and contexts (Austin, 1975; Searle, 1969).

The adjective *performative* is used to describe specific and often empirically generated actions and language that perform or co-create meaning. The noun *performativity* refers to the concept or the phenomenon of performing actions through language. It can, for example, be a matter of constructing and staging identities and roles in social contexts.

Judith Butler's (1988) concept of performativity is often used as a theoretical framework in pedagogical studies to understand how identities, social roles, and power structures are constructed and staged in the classroom. While the adjective 'performative' is used primarily to explore the influence and impact of specific and empirical utterances and actions, 'performativity' is used to describe and explore broader social and pedagogical processes that are created and sustained through repetition, systematisation and progression in the execution, development and exploration of actions and skills.

Performative theory has its origin in John Langshaw Austin's (1962) speech act theory. Austin is interested in how philosophers and linguists have become fixated on language's descriptive and demonstrative function (constatives), for example, the notion that linguistic utterances can be validated as either true or false (Austin, 1962, pp. 92–98, 101, 102).

Austin believes we often use language in ways that do not merely describe the world, but which *do* something to it. Austin calls these 'performative utterances' (Austin, 1962). He divides these into three types of actions: locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary.

Locutionary actions (*from English* locution, 'utterance') are about the information conveyed, that is, what is expressed (Austin, 1962, pp. 92–98, 101, 102). The philosopher Renia Gasparatou (2016, 2017), who has adapted Austin's speech act theory for education and teaching, writes that *locutionary* actions can be understood as the professional content and resources the teacher chooses (and leaves out) before teaching is put into action (Gasparatou, 2016, p. 320; 2017, p. 511).

Illocutionary actions are the speech acts that are executed (here and now). They can, for example, be actions such as asking, apologising, correcting or encouraging. The interaction between locutionary and illocutionary actions expresses the pedagogical and emotional intentions and purpose of the action.

Perlocutionary actions concern how locutionary and illocutionary actions are understood and perceived by recipients and participants: for example, how speech acts influence interactions between a teacher educator and a preservice

teacher, and the ways in which actions leave an impression and contribute to the desire and willingness to co-create meaning. In the short term, and in local contexts, perlocutionary actions focus on the students' experiences of the specific teaching session: for example, are they inspired, motivated or provoked, and do they experience meaning and learning (Gasparatou, 2016, pp. 324–327, 2018)? On a longer timescale, perlocutionary actions deal with how teacher education contributes to training professional teachers who are equipped to work together to develop, explore and reflect on pedagogical actions (Gasparatou, 2017).

Austin emphasises that the three forms of action cannot be clearly separated from each other; we need to understand 'the total speech situation' to understand what has been said and how the action operates (Austin, 1962, p. 147; Gasparatou, 2017, p. 512).

Mark Warren Liew (2013) takes Austin's theory as his starting point when he describes teaching as a composite of performative actions such as convincing others, challenging preconceptions, inviting objections, creating reflections or provoking questions. Liew writes that all teaching consists of pedagogical perlocutions, and that teaching's performativity is first and foremost about interaction and co-creation between teacher and students.

In order for actions to be characterised as performative, it is not enough that the utterance is understood (p. 266); it must bring about some form of cognitive, affective or behavioural change. The actions cannot be understood exclusively in terms of their characteristics; they are also conveyed by the pedagogical participants. Consequently, it is the performative aspect that expresses the action's power to influence and impact these participants.

Austin's understanding of performativity has been further developed in many directions within the fields of sociology (Butler, 1988), dramaturgy (Fischer-Lichte, 2008), philosophy (Gasparatou, 2016) and art-based educational research (Østern & Knudsen, 2019).

In order to show how I have proceeded to identify and analyse studies using performativity as an analytical approach, I present the materials and methods of the study.

Materials and methods

This paper is the result of a literature review based on a research question. My intention was to explore how selected research literature uses and understands performative perspectives in pedagogical and didactic contexts. I started by identifying the relevant research literature.

Two databases were selected: Idunn (research primarily in Norwegian) and Eric. Initially, database searches of peer-reviewed literature were conducted interactively. Texts were identified through searches for primary keywords that combined ‘teaching’ or ‘teacher education’ with ‘performativity’ or ‘performative’. Except for Ball’s (2003) article, which conveys an important turning point in the understanding of performativity, the search was limited to work done between 2016 and 2024.

The criteria for inclusion were that the empirical examples and data concerned teaching and teacher education. I disregarded articles that did not explicitly link performative/performativity to actions and skills in the teaching profession.

I then analysed 16 articles, asking three questions:

- How are performativity/performative actions defined and exemplified?
- How is performativity/performative used to describe, explain and/or explore practical actions in teaching?
- Which possibilities and potential problems are identified and discussed?

The analysis generated two perspectives: *performative education* and *performative teaching*. The most important difference between these two is that *performative education* is about identifying and describing practices that are relevant and effective across local educational contexts and institutions, while *performative teaching* is more about how teachers, preservice teachers and teacher educators explore and develop their own local practices independently of external demands.

Performative education (8 articles)

Research is conducted on processes, methods and language that can function across local practices and strengthen and unite the teaching profession from within in order to counteract performative management and outside control.

Performative teaching (8 articles)

Research is conducted on arenas, processes, aesthetic teaching methods and actions that can contribute to teachers'/preservice teachers' development and exploration of their own repertoire of expression and action through interaction with colleagues and fellow preservice teachers.

Performative education

The articles I have categorised under the perspective of *performative education* deal with how the teaching profession can agree on developing one (or several) collective and articulated professional identities rooted in practices and actions. Emphasis is placed on identifying and describing actions that can be developed and sustained through repetition, systematisation and specific techniques such as methods, procedures, observation manuals, and tests (Darling-Hammond, 2015). This research is often used to regulate what is taught (curriculum) and how it is taught (pedagogy) (Sing, 2018, p. 491).

There can also be more open and flexible actions linked to the teachers' repertoire of expression. All of the studies within this category criticise structures, processes and instruments that are used to regulate and control teachers' opportunities to choose and explore their own practices in interaction with colleagues and fellow students.

The terrors of performativity

One of the first to criticise what he called a performative regime was the sociologist Stephen Ball (2003). In his seminal text, 'The teacher's soul and the terrors of performativity' (2003), he explains performativity as such:

Performativity is a technology, a culture and a mode of regulation that employs judgements, comparisons and displays as means of incentive, control, attrition and change based on rewards and sanctions (both material and symbolic). The performances (of individual subjects or organizations) serve as measures of productivity or output, or displays of ‘quality’, or ‘moments’ of promotion or inspection. As such they stand for, encapsulate or represent the worth, quality or value of an individual or organization within a field of judgement. (Ball 2003, p. 216)

Taking Ball’s criticism as their starting point, Jessica Holloway and Jory Brass (2016) have researched how teachers’ acceptance of the performative culture changed between 2003 and 2013. The study shows that, by 2013, teachers no longer viewed objectification, quantification, and measurement as antithetical to teacher professionalism. On the contrary, they believed collective performative standards were precisely what they needed to know and monitor to improve and fashion themselves as professionals (Holloway & Brass, 2018, p. 20).

These teachers had become blind to the power structures they themselves were a part of. Additionally, Holloway and Brass write that this leads to teachers being less equipped to identify and understand power and knowledge that shape their imagining of schools and teachers. Holloway and Brass argue that teachers should reflect more deeply on how their own practices, values and subjectivities are influenced by and consolidate ‘the terror’ from outside.

Twenty years after Ball’s first critical article, performative counterforces are expressed even more clearly in research literature. Pennie L. Gray and Seiki Sumer (2020) have researched the pressures and struggles that teachers face when they are subjected to external systems of reporting and evaluation. One of their findings is that performative pressure particularly affects newly qualified teachers. These individuals experienced having fewer opportunities to develop and explore their own teaching. They felt powerless and several experienced crises linked to their own professional identity: ‘At times, these external expectations created a crisis in values, with the starting teachers feeling they had to abandon what they knew to be effective practices and instead adopt the school norms or approaches that would meet these external demands’ (p. 1).

Evaluation and reporting with no connection to practical classroom teaching led to their loss of motivation to continue in the profession.

In another article, Holloway (2021) concludes by saying that the technology of performativity (along with the technologies of the market and managerialism) operates as a new frame of power/knowledge that structures what is 'true' about teachers and teaching (p. 35). She goes on to write that within this performative regime, the 'good' teacher is the one who responds precisely and 'correctly' to external performance targets.

Closed performative structures limit the teacher's opportunity to resist and create alternatives to the demands and expectations of governments and policymakers for change and innovation. Holloway states that performative action demands are a threat to teachers' autonomy and lessen opportunities to develop the teaching profession from within.

Nonetheless, there are several researchers who propose alternatives to how the teaching profession's action practices can be further developed. These are linked to what is called a *performative turn*.

Performative turn

The performative turn is a matter of strengthening performative teachers' knowledge of how to explore and develop their own practices, in interaction with colleagues and fellow students. Qualities and language that unite and function collectively, across local contexts and institutions, are sought out. The studies make several suggestions.

Raymond (2018) suggests that preservice teachers work systematically over time with *creativity* as a practical approach to exploring and experimenting. He recommends that preservice teachers exercise and explore their creative capacities and creative practice. Through practical training, the preservice teachers will become better equipped to facilitate and develop the life-enhancing capacities of creative expression (cf. Ball's 'soul').

Raymond is not concerned with reproducing established practices, but with exploring and creating something new (for the students). Furthermore, Raymond writes that in this way the students will become equipped to challenge the logic of performativity (terror) in a way 'that allows them to be true to themselves' (p. 144). An overriding goal of Raymond's research is to develop a new generation of teachers empowered with the professional confidence to live out their own definitions and expressions of pedagogical creativity (p. 144).

In this way, preservice teachers can both resist and propose alternatives to performative demands imposed from the outside.

A second strategy from several researchers proposes ways to create correlations between collective values, professional language, and more situational actions.

Appel (2020) proposes a rebalancing framework that establishes a balance between control and collaboration. Here he suggests what he calls interconnecting elements of leadership, professional learning and responsible, informed accountability. Systematic work to link learning, teaching, and leadership more closely will make it possible to adjust performative structures across local contexts.

Frostenson Englund (2020) suggest processes whereby teachers work together to explore tensions between humanistic values and performative techniques. They recommend that teachers re-imagine ‘the field of judgement’ through professional development.

Holloway (2021) is also concerned with educating teachers who have the knowledge and experience that can explore and create new actions and teaching practices. Like Frostenson and Englund (2020), she suggests teachers must develop mechanisms and processes that allow for and enable interplay between performative techniques and professional humanistic values.

In order to resist performative action demands, it is encouraged that teachers develop and creatively explore their repertoire of action and expression.

Collectively, the research literature identifies several tensions.

In summary, the studies specify to a limited extent how teacher training can contribute to preservice teachers developing the confidence and competence to challenge narrow beliefs and standards and ‘live out their active definitions and expressions of creativity, approaching teaching and learning creatively’ (Raymond, 2018, p. 146). It is not clearly expressed *how* this creativity is supposed to be explored and developed.

Discussion: Performative tensions 1

The most prominent tension within *performative education* is between performative demands (imposed from the outside) and teachers’ autonomy to practise their vocation. The researchers are interested in creating a counterforce to what is called ‘performative terror’ by reformulating and criticising the basis of knowledge control, what is executed and done in the form of different

practices. They are also interested in developing a professional language that can be used to create closer correlation between more primary values and concrete teaching practices.

Several studies explore tensions between standardised or collective actions and those that are more creative and innovative. These studies investigate processes that give teachers and students more space to develop their own repertoire of expression. Although all the researchers argue that there is a need for more knowledge about innovative processes and forms of interaction, few empirical examples are given of how these are concretely facilitated and executed.

A more implicit form of tension exists between the teachers' practical actions and the language that is used. The language is rather general and basic; there are few terms used to describe the qualities and nuances of empirical actions and practices.

Even within a performative turn – where the concern is with developing actions and language with several nuances and more power – there are few empirical examples in which the action data is analysed.

Overall, *performative education* expresses tensions between what I have previously explained as locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary actions. It can be said that the researchers are more concerned with identifying the purpose of the action, the locutionary and illocutionary qualities, than with how the action influences, is co-created and has perlocutionary power. Nor do any of the selected studies take as their starting point the adjective *performative* to explore how and why (empirical) processes and actions have the power to impact and influence the perlocutionary potential of the actions.

I have also analysed studies that I have linked to the perspective of *performative teaching*.

Performative teaching

The articles I have categorised under the perspective *performative teaching* deal with processes, forms of expression, and language that can revive and vitalise teaching in schools and teacher education. Like the studies presented in the previous category, the researchers want to make a break with what Ball

calls ‘the terror of performativity’. The researchers go even further when it comes to challenging established practices.

Erica Piazzoli and Manfred Schewe (2023) state that the word ‘performative’, when being linked to teaching, implies a reference to the FORMative. This means that teaching presents a transformative experience with a potential for personal development. In addition, emphasis is placed on the transFORMative, that is, the potentially behavioural and attitude-changing dimension of teaching and learning (p. 53).

A practical approach to performative teaching deals with researching the interaction created in the ‘here and now’ of teaching. The researchers use the adjective *performative* to explore how and why teaching can have the power to impact and influence, that is, its perlocutionary power in the teaching encounter.

Teaching as the art of the moment

Andrew Hickey and Stewart Riddle’s study (2023) takes as its starting point the fact that the work of teachers has been increasingly prescribed and standardised. This is due to the aforementioned performative restrictions of what they call ‘neoliberal education managerialism’ (p. 1).

They have observed teachers who challenge normative teaching methods through what they call ‘imaginative inquiry’ (p. 14). This means that teachers engage with students using open and flexible lesson plans, and the professional content is explored and co-created ‘here and now’. A central finding is that improvised, situational, and explorative classroom management strengthens the relationship with pupils (p. 14).

Hickey and Riddle argue that being able to improvise and co-create content with pupils is an important part of the teacher’s professionalism. In order to educate teachers who can practise performative teaching, training in practical teaching management, improvisation, and explorative teaching methods is recommended. Drama and theatre pedagogical methods, called performative strategies, are seen as a practical approach.

Performative strategies

Bärbel Jogschies, Manfred Schewe, and Anke Stöver-Blahak (2018) and Schewe (2020) have collaborated with educators in higher education to explore and

define performative teaching, learning, and research culture across disciplines. Their goal is to develop performative concepts grounded both in theory and practice for teacher education. Key characteristics include the inspiration educators derive from the performative arts, and theatre in particular.

This research emphasises the importance of using the rich sensory repertoire of the arts. Educators and students are encouraged to communicate not only verbally, but also through other expressive and visual means, engaging in the creative process with their 'head, heart, hands, and feet'. Art – theatre in particular – contributes to new thinking about how actions can be designed to appeal to emotions, impressions, and ideas. Empathy through role-playing is central.

Educators facilitate democratic and participative learning processes, with students as autonomous co-creators. Competence is achieved through practical application, and performative approaches simulate authentic contexts. Knowledge acquisition requires an inspiring and flexible environment that views experimentation and mistakes as learning opportunities.

Understanding and interacting with different media and art forms promotes democratic participation and intercultural engagement through 'performative literacy'. This shifts the focus from outcomes to activities that generate lesson content.

Annamaria Belezza (2020) is also interested in analysing teaching and learning through what she calls a 'performative lens'. Her starting point is that although many teachers do not wish to teach in performative ways ('I'm here to teach, I'm not a clown'), all teachers are creative practitioners and mediators who produce and stage manuscripts in the classroom every day.

Belezza indicates that 'the missing link' is that teachers and preservice teachers lack what she calls performative competence, something she explains as the design and expression of actions, skills, and methods involving the artistic, personal, emotional, physical and aesthetic sides of teaching and learning. In order to develop performative competence, preservice teachers must have systematic and practical training.

Like several of the researchers who write about performative teaching, she also believes that methods from drama and theatre are particularly well suited to prepare future teachers for a performative profession. The drama and theatre professions offer both physical and mental exercises that provide preservice teachers with training in staging and improvising roles, using multiple senses, and mediating and narrating in varied and interesting ways.

Performative training, in interaction with pedagogical reflection, can contribute to teachers' and preservice teachers' breaking with 'the obvious' and exploring and challenging their own practice. Performative competence can create a kind of pedagogical reorientation that makes the preservice teacher more critical of performative structures that are externally imposed.

Jaume Barrera, Sandra Saura-Mas and Asunción Blanco-Romero (2019) have developed what they call a performative strategy and model (transperformative education) that is also inspired by methods and forms of expression from the drama and theatre professions. The goal is for the experiences and narratives of preservice teachers to be expressed and integrated into their teaching through open and flexible dramaturgy.

The preservice teachers express themselves through body and voice; they perform roles and stage their own experiences and ideas. The teacher educator functions as a performance actor.

Such performative strategies represent a radical shift from a concept of knowledge as something fixed, stable, predetermined and measurable, to a demand for the professional teacher to possess other knowledge and skills. In other words, performative teaching can create performative knowledge.

Performative knowledge

Anja Kraus (2016) writes that performative knowledge cannot be dictated or prescribed, but is produced by all agents involved in the learning processes. Such an understanding of knowledge creation and learning expresses a break from a linear and causal understanding of meaning formation and learning (Kraus, 2016; Piazzoli & Mansfred, 2023).

It also marks a break from the view of professional knowledge as something fixed, stable and tangible that can be limited, listed and regulated through predetermined criteria and qualities.

Karen van den Berg and Stephan Schmidt-Wulffen (2023) state that the term 'performative knowledge' involves two discourses: performativity and epistemology. In contrast to propositional knowledge, which is often true or false, right or wrong, *performative knowledge* is always related to co-creative actions and aesthetic practices. Performative knowledge also presupposes that knowledge creation takes place in a professional community where teacher

educator and preservice teachers can observe, compare, act, repeat, and correct whatever arises and is co-created.

Van den Berg and Schmidt-Wulffen (2023) go on to point out that a performative understanding of knowledge and knowledge production has some pedagogical challenges. While propositional knowledge deals with proposing solutions, methods, and actions that can serve specific purposes, performative knowledge requires practical demonstration, modelling, and staging to be expressed. This means that if performative knowledge is to be learned, it requires a teaching format that enables active participation and interaction.

Barrera, Saura-Mas and Blanco-Romero (2019) also explain that performative knowledge forges connections between different forms of knowledge: practical knowledge (knowing how), propositional knowledge (knowing what), and political knowledge (knowing who, when, and where).

As mentioned above, the most prominent tension within *performative education* is that between performative demands (imposed from the outside) and standardised actions, and teachers' autonomy to practise and explore their vocation (performative tension 1).

The studies in this category provide few empirical examples of innovative processes and concrete, creative teaching, and their language is rather general with few nuances. Although the connection between knowing what, how and why is portrayed as more unproblematic in the category *performative teaching*, several tensions are expressed.

Discussion: Performative tensions 2

The most prominent tension identified by research is between the skills teachers should have in order to practise performative teaching, and the training that is provided. Preservice teachers are recommended to work on practical class management, improvisation, and co-creating professional content with pupils. They also have to work on using art as an inspiration for designing teaching involving the body, the emotions, and cognition (Van den Berg & Schmidt-Wulffen, 2023; Østern et al., 2023).

In order to achieve this, several obstacles need to be overcome. One practical obstacle is the lack of suitable teaching arenas, where there is room for movement and co-creation. Another problem is the time it takes to develop practical skills, compared to other subjects in teacher education. It will be

a great challenge – and take a long time – for both teacher educators and preservice teachers to break with known practices and undertake behaviour-changing activities – and hopefully create something original.

The selected research literature provides limited empirical knowledge of how instruction and training in performative teaching can be planned and carried out systematically in and across subjects. The studies mostly use self-reporting interview data and concentrate on short-lived, single-case studies (Møller-Skau & Lindstøl, 2021, p. 10). As a potential solution, several researchers turn to the long tradition of performative teaching found in the drama and theatre professions, which have methods, forms of expression, theory and dramaturgy that are extremely suitable for teachers (Bakke & Lindstøl, 2023). However, there are few empirical studies that thematise and explore how drama and theatre pedagogy is used to teach and train practical skills and actions.

A more implicit form of tension exists between the concrete practices that are executed and the abstract language used to describe them. The researchers offer terms and models that describe performative teaching and explain performative knowledge. These terms are not always simple to grasp, particularly for teachers and preservice teachers without aesthetic experience and knowledge. There is a danger that performative language may render performative teaching commonplace or be inadequate to describe its potential.

Like the perspective *performative education*, *performative teaching* expresses tensions between locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary actions. It can be said that the researchers are more concerned with how the action influences and co-creates ‘in the here and now’ than with focusing on the teachers’ intentions and goals. In other words, the teacher is more concerned with the perlocutionary powers than the locutionary and illocutionary qualities.

In summary, the two performative perspectives explore different dimensions that are relevant for teaching about actions in teacher education. One dimension concerns identifying actions to be taught, for example: How is the action regulated in policy documents and course descriptions (laws, plans...)? Which kinds of performative actions are to be explored, and what is the possible and imagined purpose of the actions (core-practice or other actions)? Which (professional/performative) theory and languages can be used to describe and reflect on the actions in nuanced and precise ways?

Another dimension is more concerned with how teaching is to be facilitated and framed, for example: Which skills and content knowledge are required to carry out the action? How can actions be designed and transformed in different ways, and how does this influence the interaction between participants? How can the preservice teachers exercise and explore their creative capacities (improvise, simulate, experiment...)?

In short, the two perspectives connect and express nuances and links between locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary actions. We also see that there is a need for empirical studies in which performative qualities and visions are explored and expressed in concrete teaching. This will require a reorientation in terms of what counts as valid knowledge in teacher education.

In what follows, I propose an ontological position that provides greater space for teacher educators, teachers, and preservice teachers to explore, develop and legitimise professional teaching practices in, and across, institutions.

Connecting performative actions, language and knowledge

In this study, I seek new knowledge about how a performative perspective can be used as both a practical approach and a theoretical framework to explore practical skills and actions in teacher education. All the selected articles argue that pedagogical actions must be developed from within, through co-creative processes that pave the way for collective and creative practices. However, we find different strategies and objectives.

As far as *performative education* is concerned, it is primarily a matter of identifying and describing techniques and actions that can be co-created and maintained through repetition and adaptation to different pedagogical contexts. The researchers describe different processes – from the known and established to the less familiar and creative.

When it comes to *performative teaching*, it is primarily a matter of renewing, breaking and challenging what is done, of moving further and further into the unknown.

Even though both groups of researchers argue there is a need for more knowledge about teaching in teacher education, they provide few empirical examples, and those given are largely isolated ones. There is a need for more knowledge about how practical professional development, teaching and

practical training can be facilitated, structured, and connected over time and across local contexts. Since it is clear that the drama and theatre professions can provide practical approaches, there is a need for more teacher educators (and teachers) with specialist competence in drama and theatre.

Researchers concerned with *performative education* propose a rebalancing framework to link performative techniques and performative values. The terms are influenced by a policy discourse designed to regulate and control the teaching profession from the outside.

When it comes to *performative teaching*, researchers adapt terms from art and aesthetics. Some of these terms are experienced as abstract and diffuse, and can be difficult to connect to practical teaching. There is a danger that abstract aesthetic language can seem just as terrorising and controlling as the external regulation that is criticised.

In this study, I am working towards a performative pedagogy that can explore how different actions may stage meaning and subject content in different forms of teaching. A performative pedagogy includes various modalities and aesthetic forms of expression, such as body, voice, space, text, and time.

In order to include performative pedagogy in teacher education, there is a need for arenas and working methods where preservice teachers can practise, explore, and reflect on alternative actions and courses of action (read more about arenas and teaching methods suitable for exploring a performative pedagogy in Lindstøl 2017, 2018, 2021). This is not about identifying ready-made solutions, exemplary practices and fixed routines, but about exploring patterns of action and language that can be transformed and adapted to different educational contexts.

A performative pedagogy offers both a practical opening and a theoretical framework that can facilitate professional reflection and development, more free from the pressures of external control.

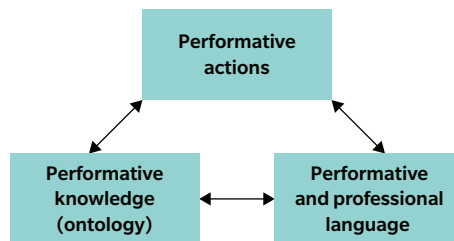
A performative pedagogy sees teaching as a momentary, situational, and context-dependent art. This has implications for how we demarcate and encircle objects of study in performative research, and how we understand knowledge creation in educational contexts.

If researchers want to expand the teacher's professional scope, it is important to explore and develop slightly wobbly bridges and paths, which can connect actions, language, and knowledge (ontology) in performative research.

A performative concept of knowledge expresses a break from a more propositional concept of knowledge, where knowledge creation is controlled by specific learning outcomes descriptions and specialised evaluation criteria. Performative knowledge expresses an ontological shift from knowledge as something that *is* to knowledge as something that *becomes* – a circular process that can be illustrated in this model:

Figure 4.1

Connections and tensions between performative actions, performative and professional language, and performative knowledge (ontology)



Let me end with a brief description of a teaching session: ‘Imagine that someone who is not a teacher, such as a politician, tries to decide how you teach in your classroom. What can you do to protect your teaching practice? How can the teaching profession be developed from within?’

This is how the teacher educator ends a lesson.

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Part 2

Illustrative Examples of Rehearsing from the Project Rehearsing Teaching Professionally

