

Haukanes, S. (2025). Cultivating democratic formation through reflective rehearsals in teacher education. In M. A. Cabot, S. M. Høisæter & V. Vangsnes (Eds.), *Rehearsing for teaching: Theoretical and empirical approaches to a practice-based teacher education* (pp. 51–69). Fagbokforlaget. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.55669/oa600501>

1

Cultivating democratic formation through reflective rehearsals in teacher education

Sigrid Haukanes¹

¹ Western Norway University of Applied Sciences

Abstract: This theoretical article examines the role of critical and reflective rehearsals in teacher education as a means to foster preservice teachers' democratic formation. It emphasises the necessity of integrating critical reflection with practical action. This integration prepares preservice teachers to participate in the school's democratic societal mandate. Drawing on theories from scholars and educational philosophers such as John Dewey, Paulo Freire, and Jürgen Habermas, the article argues that rehearsals in teacher education must surpass the mere dissemination and adoption of 'best practices.' Instead, they should serve as platforms for preservice teachers to engage in critical scrutiny of themselves and their surroundings. This promotes an understanding of the social, cultural, and political contexts of education. In conclusion, the article presents the rehearsal cycle implemented in teacher education by the project Rehearsing Teaching Professionally as a methodical example. It illustrates how this cycle can be used to enhance critical thinking and democratic engagement.

Keywords: democratic formation, critical thinking, practice, teacher education

Sammendrag: Denne teoretiske artikkelen undersøker korleis kritiske og refleksive øvingar i lærarutdanninga kan tene som eit middel for å fremje lærarstudentar si demokratiske danning. Det understrekar samankoplinga mellom kritisk refleksjon og praktisk handling som naudsynt for å førebu lærarstudentar til å delta i skulen sitt demokratiske samfunnsmandat. Med utgangspunkt i teoretikarar og utdanningsfilosofar som John Dewey, Paulo Freire og Jürgen Habermas, argumenterer artikkelen for at øvingar i lærarutdanninga må omfatte meir enn ei vidareformidling av effektive strategiar. Øvingane bør omfatte lærarstudentar si kritiske gransking av seg sjølve og sine omgjevnadar, for slik å fremje ei forståing av utdanning som sosialt, kulturelt og politisk situert. Artikkelen presenterer avslutningsvis øvingssyklusen implementert i lærarutdanninga av prosjektet Rehearsing Teaching Professionally som eit metodisk døme, og illustrerer korleis denne kan nyttast til å styrkje kritisk tenking og demokratisk danning.

Nøkkelord: demokratisk danning, kritisk tenking, øving, lærarutdanning

Introduction

In a multicultural, globalised society marked by growing inequalities, it is imperative for preservice teachers (PSTs) to develop an understanding of how teaching relates to the societal mandate of fostering democratic competencies, values, and actions. In Norway, the aim of democracy and citizenship is emphasised across disciplines in the core curriculum (Ministry of Education and Research, 2017). At the same time, a challenge for teacher education is to cultivate forms of democratic professionalism that promote social justice (Zeichner, 2010). A condition for this objective is that teacher education is not reduced to the reproduction of traditional instructional norms; rather, it should promote possibilities for co-creating democratic practices.

Conventional approaches in teacher education have been critiqued for their limited responsiveness to the needs of PSTs and their lack of transformative impact on practice (Korthagen et al., 2006; Liston & Zeichner, 1987). In response to such challenges, practice-based teacher education has taken form and gained attention. Grossman and McDonald (2008) emphasise enacting teaching through what they term ‘pedagogies of enactment’. Drawing inspiration from Grossman’s ‘approximations of practice’ (2018; 2008) and ‘the learning cycle’ by McDonald et al. (2013), the project *Rehearsing Teaching Professionally* (ReTPro) has introduced reflective rehearsal cycles in a Norwegian teacher education programme.

Criticism of practice-based teacher education and Grossman’s (2018) definition of ‘core’ practices points out that producing narrow definitions of ‘good’ teaching or ‘effective’ strategies, disregarding teaching as situated within a social, cultural, historical, and political context, is highly problematic (Philip et al., 2019; Zeichner, 2012). However, what is considered ‘practice-based’ is understood and implemented in various ways and for different purposes in teacher education programmes (Zeichner, 2012). Fitchett and Moore (2022) find that rehearsals can provide justification for decision-making and criticism of pedagogical choices, and render visible dilemmas and growing pains inherent to teaching. The intentions, assumptions, and pedagogical framework that underpin rehearsal cycles may influence their contributions to teacher education.

This article seeks to discuss a possible theoretical framework for understanding reflective rehearsals in relation to democratic formation.

Alongside learning ‘how to teach’, PSTs should simultaneously cultivate a critically reflective stance, which is necessary for their future role in upholding the democratic mandate entrusted to schools. According to Jannicke Heldal (2023, pp. 23–43), this mandate can be delineated into two dimensions. On the one hand, it involves the qualification of future generations through the transmission of knowledge and competencies to engage in labour and participate in a democratic society. On the other hand, it encompasses human development processes, where knowledge, socialisation, and identity formation are interwoven over time (Biesta et al., 2015, 2016).

This article emphasises the latter dimension, which is often referred to as subjectification, democratic formation, or *Bildung*. Democracy is a fragile entity that demands a collective endeavour. As Flanagan elucidates, democracy is a system of thought into which individuals are socialised (2013, p. 12). The foundation of social justice, democratic power sharing, the rule of law, and governance for and by the people hinges on the cultivation of critical thinking, democratic values, and interactions.

A problem in teacher education has been the promotion of reflection as an end in itself, understood as an individual activity disconnected from a democratic or political project (Zeichner & Gore, 1995). This may be related to a misconception that educators should remain neutral, which Hellesnes (1975a) underlined is directly harmful to both democracy and a democratic upbringing.

Through rehearsals oriented towards democratic formation, PSTs should engage with critical questions inside and outside of the classroom. In this manner, their future students can be familiarised with and included as subjects in discussion and transformation of ‘the game’ and not be reduced to adaptive objects simply learning to play by its rules.

Drawing upon the works of scholars and philosophers of education such as John Dewey, Paulo Freire, Jürgen Habermas, and others, this article addresses the following question: *How can critical and reflective rehearsals in teacher education foster democratic formation amongst preservice teachers?* This question underpins the theoretical discussion in upcoming sections.

The article initially explores the challenge of integrating reflection and experience in teacher education, underscoring the preconditions for rehearsals to be relevant for PSTs’ democratic formation. Three key elements are emphasised.

Firstly, as reflective subjects, our context-specific positioning must be acknowledged and scrutinised to leverage the emancipatory potential of critical reflection.

Secondly, to comprehend our interconnectedness with others and collectively strive towards a common good, we must enhance our capacity to adopt others' perspectives.

The third aspect emphasises reflection as a means of resistance against passive compliance.

Lastly, ReTPro's rehearsal cycle is discussed as a methodical example of how rehearsals may be enacted in teacher education to foster critical reflective practice and democratic formation.

Reflective rehearsing and democratic formation

Teacher education should intellectually and practically prepare future teachers for developing and enacting professional practice. A challenge mentioned initially lies in enabling PSTs to integrate reflection with practical action.

For Dewey, reflection is linked to previous experience. When we reflect, we transform what begins as an immediate intuition from our experience through ideas and conceptualisation (Dewey, 1998d). Experience, Dewey explains, consists of transformative events that influence an individual's ability to form insights, attitudes, and judgements, while also being a product of the surrounding environment (Dewey, 1997).

Education can thus be understood as the collective sum of experiences from previous generations, transformed into ideas and concepts. In this respect, Dewey has been criticised for a lack of connection between education as experience and its cultural or societal purpose (Bonde, 1970). This critique may be relevant for teacher education, as it raises the question: Is it always tenable and acceptable to reproduce our experiences (individually or collectively) through our actions?

In teacher education, PSTs bring with them previous experiences as former students in school, which affect their understanding of what constitutes 'good' or 'democratic' teaching. Often, these initial understandings

lack professional judgement and can potentially be problematic, considering a democratic purpose, if implemented without critical awareness. Certain experiences with and reflections on teaching may be harmful to reenact in a classroom, as our societal understanding of educational purposes, problems, and ideals is constantly evolving.

Therefore, teacher education must challenge and scrutinise these perceptions while simultaneously facilitating the creation of new experiences and reflections amongst PSTs. In this mission, responsibility rests on teacher education concerning PSTs' democratic formation.

Formation is used in this chapter as an English translation for the German concept of *Bildung* and the Norwegian term *danning*. It is, however, a difficult concept to translate because of its relation to tradition and historical context. One could argue that there is no direct equivalent term that captures the full depth and nuance in the English language.

The concept of formation has been interpreted and applied in various ways. Generally, it can be defined as both the process and the product of personal development, guided by reason (Gundem, 2011). Another definition points to a form of socialisation that opposes adaptation. Hellesnes (1975b) explains that adaptation is about learning the rules without seeing that the game can be discussed and changed. This reduces individuals to objects for political processes that they do not see as political. Formation is about being socialised into issues concerning the conditions for what happens around us and with us. Therefore, it emancipates individuals to political, acting, and thinking subjects (Hellesnes, 1975b).

Formation thus affirms a critical, self-reflexive, and political subjectivity with a fundamental attitude oriented towards investigation and problematisation (Koselleck, 2007, p. 43; Straume, 2013, p. 30).

Within education, reflection is integral to democratic formation. The democratic mandate of education has been defined by Martha Nussbaum (1997) as cultivating humanity or 'nurturing the human'. Here, the capacity for reflection is necessary in three areas: (1) critically reflecting on oneself and one's traditions, (2) seeing oneself as connected to a holistic social community beyond one's close relationships, and (3) developing the ability to empathise with others' situations (Nussbaum, 1997, pp. 9–10). These are aspects of democratic formation that teacher education should introduce PSTs to.

Further in the article, an interplay between critical, reflective rehearsing and democratic formation is argued for through the capacities emphasised by Nussbaum.

Returning to the connection between experience and reflection, this chapter argues that rehearsing in teacher education can be an arena for PSTs to create new experiences with teaching that can promote their democratic formation. Through rehearsing, PSTs can gain new perspectives on their previous perceptions of teaching and gain a foundation for evaluating educational goals and practices against democratic values and attitudes.

However, a prerequisite for this is that rehearsing throughout teacher education encompasses critical reflection and encourages critical judgement. PSTs must rehearse to question what they aim to achieve by teaching, where these ideals originate, and how they attempt to achieve certain goals. As underlined by Zeichner and Gore (1995), it is simultaneously essential that PSTs' reflections are not treated as an end goal in itself. Instead, reflection should foster the realisation of democratic intentions in practical action.

Critical self-reflection and contextual awareness

As reflective subjects, we are situated in time and space. When do we reflect, and what do we reflect upon? Reflection is connected to disciplinary, didactic, pedagogical, and professional questions in teacher education. Such questions are also situated within a context.

Dewey (1998a) points out that context functions as a vessel, not a destination. In other words, context transports the mind beyond itself. For democracy, it is essential to maintain a critical approach to our perceptions as products of the relationship between our subjective experiences and the contexts in which they arise. Our various motives for reflecting on specific questions at certain times must be considered to realise an emancipatory potential (Swindal, 1999, p. 230).

In *Postmetaphysical Thinking* (1992, p. 188), Habermas writes that our reflective awareness in time has led to many of our systems and actions being determined by our expectations of the future. This is also evident in education

in numerous ways. In addition to painting a picture of the present, educational reforms and the shaping of school subjects and curricula can also be thought to address an imagined future. The question of what should be taught in school is linked to what future generations will face in their young and adult lives. Recently, education has been focused on what is termed *21st Century Skills* (NOU 2014, p. 7). An increased focus on qualification for democracy and citizenship is a product of current expectations of what will serve us – or our nation – in the future.

In distinction, the formational and reflective dimension of democratic citizenship involves critically examining how this process unfolds. Pertinent questions in this context include how and by whom our expectations for the future are defined, and how the future we envision affects us and our present circumstances.

Representations of future expectations are found in school content. The consequences of climate challenges, technological development, and increasing socio-economic inequalities are current topics in various subjects that shape our perceptions of the time to come. A difference between what exists and what is possible is essential here. Dewey (2000) points out that reflection involves developing in new directions because the existing only matters if it is meaningful for the possible.

Through education aimed at democratic citizenship, a crucial point is that the future is created; it is not available to us in the present. This is also central for Freire, who, in his critique of an oppressive education system, emphasises rejecting both a view of the present as ‘well-behaved’ and a pre-defined future (2005, p. 85). The emancipatory aspect lies in the notion that the (social) world is not statically constructed. It is precisely such an understanding that makes societal change and improvement possible.

The ability to understand oneself as situated in but simultaneously an active creator of context can be practised in teacher education. This can be integrated into rehearsals by reflecting analytically on our assumptions and actions as teachers and educators.

Adorno and Horkheimer (1972, p. 189) explain that reflection on an object and self-reflection are interconnected; if one does not reflect on the world, one loses the ability to reflect on oneself and the capacity to distinguish between these forms. Reflection can thus be described as an analytical distance to oneself and one’s surroundings, making it possible to gain insight into both.

In teacher education, such an analytical gaze can, on the one hand, involve critically examining what perceptions, experiences, and assumptions we as teachers bring into a situation and how these shape choices and judgments during teaching. On the other hand, it is about exploring how one's actions can change the situation in which they are performed. Incorporating this into rehearsals may foster a form of self-awareness which recognises both the influence of context and future possibilities.

Perspective-taking and self-understanding

Democratic formation and education concern our coexistence with others. The social element of reflection is pertinent in this context, as democracy has been termed the 'regime of collective reflectiveness' (Castoriadis, 1997, p. 132). Reflection can be regarded as fundamentally social.

Dewey (1998b) asserts that individuals who exist alone, whether mentally or physically, have few or no opportunities to reflect on experiences and discern their true value. Democracy demands that individuals use reflection to limit the selfishness inherent in their interests, thereby achieving a broader social perspective (Habermas, 1992; Swindal, 1999, p. 3). In this way, reflection can be directly linked to democracy as a way of life and a societal form of co-existence.

A persistent challenge of democracy is thus to relate to and care for individuals who hold different opinions, interests, and needs from our own. To understand ourselves as part of a larger public and a democratic community, one must also be able to empathise with the situations and perspectives of others.

Through rehearsals in teacher education, one can address this challenge by incorporating perspective-taking. For Habermas, perspective-taking is understood as a component of discourse theory, aiming to share and coordinate perspectives across a group of individuals. Through intersubjective communication, one transcends one's viewpoint and incorporates the views of those with whom one communicates (Habermas, 1993, p. 23).

In *Justification and Application*, Habermas (1993, p. 24) writes that for perspective-taking to occur, the entire group must first be included in a pre-interpreted lifeworld to thematise a problematised norm. This could mean presenting a hypothetical example. By stepping out of one's everyday understanding of the world, one creates space to meet each other's perspectives (Habermas, 1993, p. 12).

This assertion is challenged in an educational context by Paulo Freire, who claims the opposite in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Since humans do not exist apart from their context and reality, he argues that one must start from the standpoint of individuals 'here and now' through authentic problem-oriented teaching (Freire, 2005, p. 85).

Collective discussions in rehearsals, whether arising from a hypothetical or an authentic experience, may support PSTs' democratic formation.

In educational contexts, the aim of collective discussions may differ. Habermas is perhaps best known for his deliberative understanding of democracy and the possibilities for reaching consensus (Habermas, 1998). Here, perspective-taking is a premise for any form of agreement to emerge (Swindal, 1999, p. 200). Agreement should not be understood as something that arises quickly and spontaneously, because it requires reflective actions from all participants. Therefore, it is a complicated process and not always possible to achieve.

Political democracy differs from educational situations in that formal laws and regulations must be enacted through democratic processes as a form of collective 'agreement'. This does not mean that the people collectively agree on all decisions made, but that the decisions are based upon consideration of the people's diverse opinions, values and needs.

Hess (2009) has suggested that dealing with controversial issues through discussion in education may be regarded as a proxy for democracy. In education, significant societal decisions are not undertaken. Therefore, classrooms might function as a safe arena for presenting different experiences and facing disagreement (Iversen, 2014).

In line with what Iversen (2014, p. 9) names *the community of disagreement*, practising how to disagree while still being part of a community can be a prerequisite for countering an oppressive and polarised society.

A unique quality of schools and universities is that they gather students with various backgrounds, values, and political beliefs. Freire states in *Seri-*

ousness and Happiness (2016, p. 47) that educational practice should provide experiences of the power and value of unity within diversity. Through understanding others, we also begin to understand ourselves and our interconnectedness. Therefore, perspective-taking plays a vital role in identity development.

For Habermas, identity is threefold. *Numerical* identity refers to our self-determination. *Generic* identity concerns who we are as speaking and acting subjects, while the *qualitative* dimension refers to something achieved through human development (Habermas, 1987, p. 105). Qualitative identity arises by answering the question, ‘Who do I wish to be?’. This question may pertain to PSTs in teacher education by specifying it to: ‘Who do I wish to be as a teacher?’.

Perspective-taking is thus not limited to a component in teaching deliberation, argumentation, agreement or disagreement in schools, but is also part of a personal and professional development process. It occurs throughout teacher education when PSTs encounter students’ and practicum teachers’ perspectives in schools, but it can also be rehearsed at the university campus. Stepping into the fictional roles of teachers and ‘students’ in rehearsals provides a foundation for collective discussion of the diverse experiences that may arise during teaching. Consequently, PSTs can become aware of how their actions as teachers may be perceived by students in ways that differ from their intentions.

Practising a critical democratic stance

So far, this article has addressed how the dynamics of reflective rehearsing and democratic formation may align to cultivate humanity (Nussbaum, 1997). Here, reflection upon ourselves, our contexts, and our relation to others is highlighted. In teacher education, as mentioned, it is concurrently essential that reflection interacts with action.

Professional practice concerning democratic formation should separate education from indoctrination (Dewey, 1998c; Hellesnes, 1975b). This poses a challenge for rehearsals in teacher education as new PSTs may crave definite answers on how to teach (Haukanes, 2024) but simultaneously need to develop the ability to evaluate the answers given to them critically. Therefore,

reflective rehearsals in teacher education should not merely present solutions for educational practice but also problematise and critique practice and its surrounding structures.

Practising a critical stance might also involve problematising how education is intended to promote democracy and citizenship in schools.

Education today can, for instance, be criticised for placing the responsibility for the future too heavily on coming generations, understood as individual entities. This is debated in relation to research on youth and climate anxiety on the one hand, and the development of personal resilience through education on the other.

Straume (2023) points out the consequences of neoliberal currents in contemporary times when she writes that education has positioned the individual as the primary unit. Through teacher education, future teachers are prepared to foster democratic engagement, but for what purpose? Straume (2023, p. 109) asserts that democratic citizenship today drowns in individual rights and opportunities, while purposes that can only be conceptualised as meaningful from a collective perspective do not come to the fore.

In his critical response to *Truth and Method* (Gadamer, 2001), Habermas (2001) points out that traditions are transmitted over time as legitimate prejudices through the threat of sanctions and the prospect of rewards. This is relevant in an individualised educational system where self-control and self-improvement receive significant attention and importance. Education rewards conformity and acceptance of the system as it exists, and has the corresponding potential for punishment at the opposite end.

However, a liberating force in education can be made accessible through reflection. Habermas (2001) argues that an emancipatory potential is expressed by reflection, enabling us to reject the demands of traditions.

Through critical reflection, PSTs can develop the ability to identify and problematise forces, structures and demands that influence education. The purpose of doing so lies in understanding that reflection is connected with action. Liberation, says Freire (2005, p. 79), is a 'praxis' that human action and reflection in one's lifeworld can change and transform.

Education concerning democratic formation is not about passively adapting to a world perceived as static and unchangeable but rather, in contrast, questioning contemporary constructions and acting to enhance justice and solidarity. A prerequisite for rehearsals in teacher education to foster democratic formation is, therefore, that they encompass this critical element and do

not possess an instrumental understanding of a mission as simply transmitting 'best practices' from university to classrooms.

Suppose PSTs are not initiated into a culture where challenging existing structures, practices, or perceptions are possible or regarded as valuable. In that case, they may be less likely to do so as future teachers.

Placing rehearsing at the forefront of teacher education may give PSTs room to act by their emerging democratic reasoning. In his argument for critical and problem-oriented teaching, Freire advocates for a teacher identity that emphasises the educator as a learning subject along with the students. Teachers are thus never 'fully trained' as they reform their reflections through the students' reflections (Freire, 2005, pp. 80–81).

The value of rehearsals should thus not be reduced to demonstrating mastery of teaching practices, but rather to investigating, exploring, and enacting teaching in different contexts for further development and growth. This may familiarise PSTs with an understanding of teaching as a situated, yet continuously evolving, practice through the learning of both the teacher and the students.

Rehearsing as a critical reflective practice in teacher education

The theoretical discussion in the preceding sections may serve to establish a framework for understanding reflective rehearsals in teacher education as being relevant to fostering PSTs' democratic formation.

As mentioned at the outset, the ReTPro project presents a methodical example of how rehearsal cycles can be implemented in teacher education. Drawing upon previous discussions in this article, this concluding section addresses how rehearsal cycles can be enacted to foster democratic formation. This is done by relating each of the cycle's four phases to different forms of reflection: reflection *for*, *in*, *on*, and *about* action (Grushka et al., 2005; Leitch & Day, 2000; Schön, 1983; Zeichner & Gore, 1995; Zeichner, 1993) and the tripartite division between *technical*, *practical*, and *critical* reflection (van

Manen, 1977). An elaborative presentation and discussion of different forms of reflection is presented in Ruth Leitch's prologue in the present anthology.

ReTPro's rehearsal cycle entails four phases. In the first phase, PSTs are introduced to a subject matter where a teacher educator or practicum teacher models an example of a specific teaching activity together with PSTs. Because action is linked to previous experience, Zeichner and Gore (1995) point out that when inexperienced PSTs encounter a problem in the classroom, their way of handling it is likely to be limited to certain behaviours based on their past experiences with emotionally challenging situations. Modelling can expand PSTs' experiential base through an analytical perspective on possible actions involved in complex teaching practices.

Following Dewey's (1998d) definition, this creates opportunities for new reflections, as PSTs shape their ideas based on experiences with an example of teaching. Reflection *for* action is crucial in this phase, as PSTs are expected to develop a lesson and rehearse teaching in groups afterwards.

Modelling can also be understood as a technical reflection (van Manen, 1977), focusing on examining concrete actions, strategies, or methods that effectively achieve a specific goal. Grossman's (2018) 'core practices' can be a starting point. These include practices that, amongst other characteristics, occur frequently in teaching, can be applied across different contexts, are research-based, and are effective for student learning (Grossman et al., 2018).

A critique of such terminology is that it risks putting forth narrow and pre-defined descriptions of 'good' teaching that emphasise technical skills in favour of a pedagogical rationale (Philip et al., 2019). Approached instrumentally and technically, a danger is that this could undermine teachers' ability to exercise judgement in the interest of their students when enacted across different classrooms.

To achieve what van Manen (1977) terms critical reflection and to support democratic formation in teacher education, it is necessary to examine the ideals promoted through different examples of teaching in the modelling phase. What is the educator trying to achieve through such a practice, how and why do they attempt to do it, and can or should this be justified as a goal of education? Modelling an example of teaching should open such critical discussions, not merely present unquestionable ideals for practice. Approached with an emphasis on critical reflection, rehearsal cycles can thus support the justification of decision-making, critique pedagogical choices, and render visible dilemmas inherent to teaching.

The second phase of the cycle builds upon Grossman et al.'s (2009) concept of 'approximation of practice'. In this phase, PSTs develop their lessons and rehearse them in groups with peers. This provides PSTs with experiences of practising specific aspects of teaching in a less complex setting than authentic ones. While gaining experience with an example of teaching as 'students' and learners in the first phase (i.e. modelling phase), they can finally transform their viewpoint into a teacher's perspective in the second phase.

Phase two can be seen as connected to practical reflection (van Manen, 1977), where learning is extended by applying knowledge in our surroundings. A precondition for fostering democratic formation and pedagogical reasoning is that PSTs are not instructed to copy what has been modelled in the first phase but are rather encouraged to construct their lessons upon their own reasoning. This serves as a gradual step into phase three, where PSTs rehearse teaching in a more complex setting.

In the rehearsal cycle's third phase, PSTs rehearse teaching with real students in an authentic school setting. This phase is often more demanding for PSTs because they must consider the students' identities. Students are often unknown to PSTs entering new schools and classrooms, and it will take time before they gain insight into students' experiences, knowledge, and values.

Here, PSTs are learning subjects on an equal footing with the students, experiencing how their teaching practices are challenged, contested, and reformed through authentic interactions with students.

In phases two and three, reflection *in* and *on* action (Schön, 1983) is crucial for understanding oneself and one's interactions with peers and school students. With concern for democratic formation, self-reflexive and contextual questions are here of relevance. What unexpected events occurred in the situation? Why did I attend to it in a specific manner, what was the original intention of my actions, and what did they contribute to? As van Manen (1977) emphasises, a premise for practical reflection is to make explicit the expectations and perceptions that underpin the teaching activity and to judge how these contributed to an intended goal.

The fourth phase in the rehearsal cycle involves reflective dialogues, where PSTs, teacher educators, and practicum teachers attempt to articulate and discuss lessons and experiences. To avoid reducing reflection to 'mindless self-exploration' (Leitch & Day, 2000) or prioritising reflection over actual

classroom practice (Zeichner & Gore, 1995), a clear direction and purpose are needed in the conversation.

A problem with Schön's conceptualisation of reflection is that PSTs may be left with detailed and interesting accounts of educational practice but with relatively little knowledge about this practice's social and political context (Liston & Zeichner, 1987). In addition to understanding what has been done, what has been learned, and what one wants to develop further, reflective dialogues are also an opportunity for reflection *about* action (Zeichner & Gore, 1995). This pertains, among other things, to examining the structures and forces that control education.

In this manner, PSTs may gradually develop an awareness of the political dimension of, and the different stakeholders in, the question of what students should learn and why.

In conclusion, it is essential to emphasise that different forms of reflection do not exclude each other but should be interconnected with practice throughout rehearsal cycles. In other words, in all phases of the cycle, it is possible and tenable to link technical, practical, and critical dimensions.

As one completed cycle initiates the beginning of a new one, it provides an opportunity to place action at the forefront of teacher education, ensuring that reflection is not primarily the end product but is instead acted upon. However, it remains unclear to what extent such cycles can be implemented on a large scale within the current constraints and national regulations of teacher education programmes. A reasonable concern is whether the time and resources demanded by rehearsal cycles compromise other valuable aspects of teacher education.

If rehearsal cycles are to foster PSTs' democratic formation, this article argues that critical reflection, informed by moral and ethical considerations, should be integrated into the discourse surrounding practical action. Throughout teacher education, PSTs should critically examine the extent to which current educational structures, goals, practices, and experiences lead towards ways of life characterised by critical reasoning, justice, equality, consideration, and open-mindedness.

In light of Habermas's (1987, p. 105) notion of qualitative identity, such a connection between critical reflection and action can not only put forth the question 'Who do I wish to be as a teacher?' but also provide PSTs with an opportunity to rehearse, develop, and enact their provisional answers in practice.

References

- Adorno, T. & Horkheimer, M. (1972). *Dialectic of enlightenment* (J. Cumming, Trans.). Herder & Herder.
- Biesta, G. J. J. (2015). *Good education in an age of measurement: Ethics, politics, democracy*. Routledge.
- Biesta, G. J. J. (2016). *The beautiful risk of education*. Routledge.
- Bonde, K. (1970). *Dannelse – uddannelse*. Gyldendal.
- Castoriadis, C. (1997). *World in fragments; writings on politics, society, psychoanalysis and the imagination*. Stanford University Press.
- Dewey, J. (1997). *Experience and education*. Touchstone. (1938)
- Dewey, J. (1998a). Context and thought. In L. A. Hickman & T. M. Alexander (Eds.), *The essential Dewey. Pragmatism, education, democracy* (Vol. 1, pp. 206–235). Indiana University Press. (1931)
- Dewey, J. (1998b). Democracy and education. In L. A. Hickman & T. M. Alexander (Eds.), *The essential Dewey. Pragmatism, education, democracy* (pp. 257–265). Indiana University Press. (1916)
- Dewey, J. (1998c). Philosophy and democracy. In L. A. Hickman & T. M. Alexander (Eds.), *The essential Dewey. Pragmatism, education, democracy* (Vol. 1, pp. 71–78). Indiana University Press. (1919)
- Dewey, J. (1998d). Qualitative thought. In L. A. Hickman & T. M. Alexander (Eds.), *The essential Dewey. Pragmatism, education, democracy*. (Vol. 1, pp. 195–206). Indiana University Press. (1930)
- Dewey, J. (2000). Progressiv pedagogikk og pedagogikk som vitenskap. In S. Vaage (Ed.), *Learning by Dewey – Barnet, skolen og den nye pædagogik*. Abstrakt Forlag. (1928)
- Fitchett, P. G. & Moore, S. B. (2022). Democratizing social studies teacher education through mediated field experiences and practice-based teacher education. *The Journal of Social Studies Research*, 46(3), 169–184. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jssr.2021.09.005>
- Flanagan, C. A. (2013). *Teenage citizens: The political theories of the young*. Harvard University Press.
- Freire, P. (2005). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. The Continuum International Publishing Group.
- Freire, P. (2016). *Pedagogy of the heart* (D. Macedo & A. Oliveira, Trans.). Bloomsbury Academic.
- Gadamer, H.-G. (2001). Sannhet og metode. In S. Lægread & T. Skorgen (Eds.), *Hermeneutisk lesebok* (pp. 115–201). Spartacus forlag.
- Grossman, P. (2018). *Teaching core practices in teacher education*. Harvard Education Press.
- Grossman, P. & McDonald, M. (2008). Back to the future: Directions for research in teaching and teacher education. *American Educational Research Journal*, 45(1), 184–205. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0002831207312906>
- Grossman, P., Compton, C., Igra, D., Ronfeldt, M., Shahan, E. & Williamson, P. (2009). Teaching practice: A cross-professional perspective, 111(9), 2055–2100.

- Grossman, P., Kavanagh, S. S. & Dean, C. G. P. (2018). The turn towards practice in teacher education: An introduction to the work of the Core Practice Consortium. In P. Grossman (Ed.), *Teaching core practices in teacher education*. Harvard Education Press.
- Grushka, K., Hinde-McLeod, J. H. & Reynolds, R. M. (2005). Reflecting upon reflection: Theory and practice in one Australian university teacher education program. *Reflective Practice*, 6(2), 239–246.
- Gundem, B. B. (2011). *Europeisk didaktikk: tenking og viten*. Universitetsforlaget.
- Habermas, J. (1987). *The theory of communicative action*. Beacon.
- Habermas, J. (1992). *Postmetaphysical thinking: Philosophical essays*. The MIT Press.
- Habermas, J. (1993). *Justification and application* (C. Cronin, Trans.). The MIT Press.
- Habermas, J. (1998). *Between facts and norms: Contributions to a discourse theory of law and democracy* (W. Rehg, Trans.). The MIT Press.
- Habermas, J. (2001). Om Gadammers Sannhet og metode. In S. Lægred & T. Skorgen (Eds.), *Hermeneutisk lesebok* (pp. 307–319). Spartacus forlag.
- Haukanes, S. (2024). Norwegian preservice teachers' understanding of reflective rehearsals and democratic citizenship education: Opportunities and challenges. *Discover Education*, 3(1), 173. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s44217-024-00280-x>
- Heldal, J. (2023). *Demokratisk medborgerskap – En pedagogisk tilnærming*. Cappelen Damm Akademisk.
- Hellesnes, J. (1975a). Foredrag av Jon Hellesnes. In A. Slaatsveen (Ed.), *Pedagog eller funksjonær* (pp. 15–25). Forlaget Novus.
- Hellesnes, J. (1975b). *Sosialisering og teknokrati*. Gyldendal Norsk Forlag.
- Hess, D. E. (2009). *Controversy in the classroom. The democratic power of discussion*. Routledge.
- Iversen, L. L. (2014). *Uenighetsfelleskap. Blikk på demokratisk samhandling*. Universitetsforlaget.
- Korthagen, F., Loughran, J. & Russell, T. (2006). Developing fundamental principles for teacher education programs and practices. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 22(8), 1020–1041. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2006.04.022>
- Koselleck, R. (2007). Danningens antropologiske og semantiske struktur. *Slagmark – Tidskrift for Idéhistorie* (48).
- Leitch, R. & Day, C. (2000). Action research and reflective practice: towards a holistic view. *Educational Action Research*, 8(1), 179–193. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09650790000200108>
- Liston, D. P. & Zeichner, K. M. (1987). Critical pedagogy and teacher education. *The Journal of Education*, 169(3), 117–137. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/42741793>
- McDonald, M., Kazemi, E. & Kavanagh, S. S. (2013). Core practices and pedagogies of teacher education: A call for a common language and collective activity. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 64(5), 378–386.
- NOU 2014: 7. (2014). *Elevenes læring i fremtidens skole. Et kunnskapsgrunnlag*. Kunnskapsdepartementet. Retrieved from <https://www.regjeringen.no/contentassets/e22a715fa374474581a8c58288edc161/no/pdfs/nou201420140007000dddpdfs.pdf>
- Nussbaum, M. (1997). *Cultivating humanity*. Harvard University Press.
- Philip, T. M., Souto-Manning, M., Anderson, L., Horn, I., Carter Andrews, D. J., Stillman, J. & Varghese, M. (2019). Making justice peripheral by constructing practice as 'core': How

- the increasing prominence of core practices challenges teacher education. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 70(3), 251–264. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022487118798324>
- Schön, D. A. (1983). *The reflective practitioner*. Basic Books.
- Straume, I. (2013). Danningens filosofihistorie: En innføring. In I. Straume (Ed.), *Danningens filosofihistorie* (pp. 15–46). Gyldendal Norsk Forlag AS.
- Straume, I. (2023). *How does a society change? Reflexivity in politics and education*. Rowman & Littlefield.
- Swindal, J. (1999). *Reflection revisited. Jürgen Habermas's discursive theory of truth*. Fordham University Press.
- van Manen, M. (1977). Linking ways of knowing with ways of being practical. *Curriculum Inquiry*, 6(3), 205–228. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1179579>
- Zeichner, K. (2012). The turn once again toward practice-based teacher education. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 63(5), 376–382. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022487112445789>
- Zeichner, K. M. (1993). Action research: personal renewal and social reconstruction. *Educational Action Research*, 1, 199–220.
- Zeichner, K. & Gore, J. M. (1995). Using action research as a vehicle for student reflection. In S. Noffke & R. B. Stevenson (Eds.), *Educational action research*. Teachers College Press.

