

LOOKING AT THE MIRROR: NOVICES DO KNOW HOW TO EVALUATE THEMSELVES

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Entering into to the world of teaching is a complex process which takes its full meaning in the first year of teaching. During the induction phase, novices acquire a setting within which they can learn to evaluate themselves in relation to their teaching experience under real life framework. By using the reflective journal – as a helpful tool – they start their professional self-awareness vis-a-vis their self-assessment.

The present study is based on the analysis of reflective journals of ten novices who participated in a one year virtual mentoring and supporting workshop, which is a part of the induction year. The workshop focused, once a week, on self-reflections and thoughts about the teaching week of the novices and required a weekly report of each novice and a weekly feedback mediated by an expert mentor.

The following two main questions were examined in the present study: (1) what are the main areas of interest that novices raised in their journals (in relation to their teaching experience), and (2) what is the link between the novices' view (as reflected in their journals) and the Ministry of Education criteria for formative evaluation. In addition, the novices' reflective journals were analyzed drawing on qualitative research paradigms for themes in relation to the novices' teaching processes. Analysis of the data was inductive, based on repetitive readings of the journals' text and the analysis of 'episodes', units of content centred on a specific event or a specific reference which stands alone in terms of content and context.

The findings reveal four main areas of interest in the novices' descriptions of their teaching experience: teaching skills, navigating the class, involvement in school life and professional responsibility. Each of these areas of interest includes sub-areas. All of them had a direct connection to the Ministry of Education criteria for formative evaluation. The findings draw a detailed picture of the complexity of the first year of teaching. Furthermore, findings indicate that (1) novices are self-aware regarding their teaching skills and their teaching capacities, and (2) novices can evaluate themselves while reflecting on their teaching experience.