

SELF-ASSESSMENT AS A TOOL FOR PROFESSIONAL GROWTH IN EFL PRESERVICE TEACHER EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

Assessment in teacher education has become increasingly learner-centred, and it is now dedicated to reflection and autonomy of preservice teachers. This study investigated the process of self-assessment among preservice teachers of English education in South Korea in the framework of requirements of academic courses and preparations to take the national teacher certification exam. The study employed qualitative thematic analysis based on reflection notes and semi-structured interviews with nine participants. The findings revealed that self-assessment functions in three mutually dependent dimensions in a way that: 1) facilitates professional competence in exam preparation, 2) facilitates metacognitive monitoring of learning, and 3) contributes to the construction of teacher identity. These dimensions identify self-assessment as one of the tools of academic preparedness and a professional development and identity construction process. This study suggests that teacher education programmes should integrate structured self-assessment activities into coursework and teacher certification preparation programmes to promote preservice teachers' metacognitive awareness, reflective practice, and professional identity formation. The findings also imply that teacher education curricula in South Korea should balance examination-oriented preparation with reflective and identity-based pedagogical training so that preservice teachers can develop academic competence and sustainable professional self-awareness.

Keywords: self-assessment; assessment literacy; EFL preservice teachers; teacher education

Introduction

Assessment plays a fundamental role in the process of designing and optimising student learning processes (Orsmond et al., 2000), and it has moved beyond the

conventional assessment to new options. The evaluation of teaching in education has changed from teacher-centred modes to learner-centred modes that foster learner autonomy, motivation, and responsibility in education scenarios. In particular, self-assessment is regarded as one of the alternative assessments that expands learners' potential to monitor their own progress, build up strategies for learning, and reflect on their outcomes (Andrade & Du, 2007; Boud, 1995; Zimmerman, 2008). It is also essential to enhance academic and linguistic skills, contributing to the professional growth and identity formation of preservice teachers (Brookfield, 2017; Farrell, 2015). Despite the advantages, it may still be difficult to establish self-assessment in teacher education systems. According to Leach (2010), learners are not always confident to assess their own performance. Furthermore, incorporating self-assessment may be affected by assessment literacy and institutional demands (Casanave, 2014; Fulcher, 2012). This is challenging in the Korean setting since involvement of learners is directly connected to a high-stakes national teacher examination, which involves linguistic and pedagogical ability. Therefore, the study of the experience of preservice teachers in self-reflection within this two-fold environment—academic growth and professionalism—suggest important perspectives on the way in which a future teacher develops.

While prior studies (Andrade & Cizek, 2010; Harris et al., 2014) have focused on the benefits and characteristics of self-assessment for language learning, less attention has been paid to how preservice teachers themselves articulate their reflective practices in relation to self-assessment strategies for their learning and professional goals. Understanding these perspectives can deepen knowledge of how self-assessment supports metacognitive awareness and the formation of teacher identity and readiness for professional practice. The study examined preservice English teachers' experiences and perceptions of self-assessment of their microteaching concerning professionalism and preparation for teacher certification.

Literature Review

Self-Assessment in Teacher Education

Self-assessment may be classified into the category of alternative assessment in education (Askew, 2001; Black et al., 2003). It focuses on diversifying assessment processes, promoting learner autonomy, motivation, and responsibility (Ross, 2006). Zimmerman (2008) asserted that learners develop motivational beliefs first, and then they practise self-monitoring, and finally, they experience evaluative reflection. This introspective cycle improves the sense of ownership of learning, making it more persistent and self-efficacious (Schunk, 1996). By doing so, self-assessment is also evaluative and instructive because the students will understand the quality standards that can be used in their own work (Andrade & Du, 2007; Boud, 1995). One of the recurring conclusions in research is that the engagement of learners in self-assessment may increase their motivation, engagement, and responsibility (Andrade & Du, 2007; Harris et al., 2014). Research has revealed that self-assessment fosters the development of independence among learners and is consistent with changing trends towards learner-focused pedagogy (Brown & Hudson, 2002). Self-assessment

helps build self-regulated learning skills in the long term that are vital to academic success by making students set goals, reflect on their progress, and review their outcomes (Zimmerman, 2008).

Studies have shown that self-assessment can be improved and developed in a number of ways. The reliability and confidence of the learners are largely involved when there are clear instructions and training on the evaluation standard during the instructions. The study by Andrade and Du (2007) showed that after becoming acquainted with scoring rubrics and reflective prompts, the students experienced an increase in the reconciliation between the self-rating and external assessment. It is also important in professional development. Assessment literacy aids teachers in measuring learners and equips them with effective self-assessment (Andrade & Cizek, 2010; Malone, 2013).

Integrating the concept of self-assessment into the larger contexts of learner-centred schemes strengthens the idea of independence and constant involvement in the learning process (Nassaji, 2012). The efficacy of self-assessment is dependent on the cultural and contextual issues, including the perceptions of the learners in terms of fairness, trust in the ability of self-evaluation, and a feeling of ease in self-evaluation. In certain instances, students are hesitant since they are afraid of being judged or lack confidence in their potential to make judgment (Leach, 2010). Casanave (2014) implied that the tradition of assessment practices depends on the tradition of education, and therefore, the practicability of self-assessment should not be assumed. Often, time constraints, class size, and predetermined curriculum can limit the successful implementation of self-assessment. For example, in large classes, providing adequate feedback on the self-assessment of learners is challenging for instructors due to time constraints. Moreover, both teachers and learners frequently lack assessment literacy, the knowledge and skills required to design, implement, and interpret assessments appropriately (Fulcher, 2012; Vogt & Tsagari, 2014). Without explicit training, learners may feel ill-equipped to judge their own performance, and teachers may struggle to scaffold the process effectively (Popham, 2009).

Because self-assessment is significant in language learning, especially in productive skills (i.e., writing and oral communication), language teachers should ensure that it is both just and consistent (Andrade & Du, 2007; Brown & Harris, 2013). Well-established rubrics, scoring criteria, practice, and teacher feedback matter. The norms of student interaction and honesty in the cultures should be different. Finally, the most widely used is teacher-led assessment; self-assessment can be a more learner-centred, critical, and empowering assessment of the learner (Panadero et al., 2016). The purpose of self-evaluation in teacher education should therefore be refined by continuous research of its problems and benefits in emic terms, and these are based on the experiences of learners and teachers in their lives.

Recent studies on preservice teachers' self-assessment underscore the importance of self-assessment as a key driver of teacher development, professional competence, and instructional quality (Huang, 2022; Jalani et al., 2021; Karaman, 2024; Yigletu, 2023). Jalani et al. (2021) explored preservice teachers' self-assessment of their Technological Pedagogical and Content Knowledge (TPACK), finding that while pedagogical knowledge was relatively strong, integration of technology with pedagogy and content was weak, highlighting the need for enhanced teacher training

in technology use. Huang (2022) provided a conceptual review of EFL teachers' self-assessment, linking it directly to self-regulation and self-efficacy, and emphasised that self-assessment fosters reflection, instructional improvement, and professional growth. Karaman (2024) investigated the use of rubrics in student self-assessment, showing that structured tools help learners make more reliable judgments about their performance, thereby reinforcing accountability and learning autonomy. Yigletu's (2023) study revealed self-regulated learning among preservice teachers in self- and peer-assessments and suggested that systematic teacher training of assessment and evaluations is required to develop the culture of formative assessment in schools. According to these studies, the practice of self-assessment enhances the pedagogical competencies, technological integration, self-regulation, and professional identity of preservice and in-service teachers.

Methodology

Context and Participants

This study was conducted within a teacher education program in South Korea, where preservice English teachers were asked to evaluate their microteaching and writing during their professional preparation. Self-assessment activities on microteaching were integrated into coursework, along with writing speed essays, statements of teaching philosophy, and chapter presentations. The high-stakes national teacher certification exam also frames the institutional context and mediates student perceptions and involvement in self- and peer-assessment. This study involved nine preservice English teachers in a teacher education program. The participants were all preparing to take the teacher certification test and had already been exposed to reflective writing and activities that involve feedback in their coursework. The participants were between 22 and 26 years old. These are people who had taken a course called "English Rhetoric and Essay Writing," and it was a mandatory course to be taken by anyone who wanted to be qualified as a second-degree teacher of the English language. Participation in the research was voluntary, and pseudonyms were used to protect the anonymity of the students.

Data Collection and Analysis

Data were collected from the participants' reflection notes and semi-structured interviews, asking the participants to reflect on their experiences, perceptions, and problems of self-assessment in the course. Reflection notes were used to capture ongoing, situated meaning-making processes (Farrell, 2015). Semi-structured interviews were selected to allow depth, flexibility, and participant voice while maintaining thematic focus (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

The semi-structured interview protocol was developed based on previous studies (Andrade & Du, 2007; Meihami & Razmjoo, 2016) on self-assessment, reflective learning, and teacher identity formation in language teacher education contexts. The interview questions were informed by prior qualitative research examining learners' perceptions of assessment practices and reflective pedagogies.

The initial interview questions were refined through discussion with other qualitative research experts to improve clarity, relevance, and alignment with the research purposes. The finalized interview questions focused on four main areas: (1) how participants conceptualised self-assessment, (2) how self-assessment influenced their learning strategies and preparation for examinations, (3) what kinds of reflective or self-regulatory strategies they employed during the course, and (4) how self-assessment practices affected their emerging identity as future teachers. Follow-up questions were used flexibly during the interviews to encourage elaboration and clarification depending on participants' responses.

Reflection notes were collected biweekly throughout the semester. Participants were asked to write reflective entries after major instructional sessions and assessment-related activities. The reflection prompts encouraged students to describe their learning experiences, perceived challenges, and thoughts regarding self-assessment practices. Reflection notes were submitted electronically through the LMS to facilitate secure data collection and organization.

A total of nine participants voluntarily agreed to participate in the interviews after the completion of the course. Participants were recruited through an invitation announcement distributed by the instructor-researcher, and all participants provided informed consent prior to participation. Students were informed that participation was entirely voluntary, would not influence course grades in any way, and could be withdrawn at any time without disadvantage. The interviews were conducted individually in Korean after the final course grades had been submitted. Each interview lasted approximately 45-60 minutes with an average duration of 52 minutes. All interviews were audio-recorded with participants' permission using a digital recording device and were later transcribed verbatim for analysis.

The qualitative thematic analysis method (Braun & Clarke, 2006) was applied to analyse the data. First, the interviews were carried out in their native language, Korean, and then verbatim translated into English. The nine interview transcripts, with an average interview duration of 52 minutes, produced approximately 45,000 words of transcribed data. To improve translation accuracy and preserve participants' intended meanings, the translated transcripts were reviewed multiple times by the researchers during the analysis process. The researchers first read the transcripts and reflection notes repeatedly to achieve familiarity with the data. The transcripts were inductively coded, and the emerging codes collapsed into broad themes.

Specifically, grounded theory, according to Charmaz (2014), was used to guide the analytic procedure, giving rise to the coding matrix in Table 1. The analysis of data included an inductive approach of initial, focused, and theoretical coding that enabled categories to be generated by the participants. By using constant comparison, the codes were narrowed down to sub-themes, including accuracy in exam performance, time management assessment, the identification of weaknesses, feedback use, clarity of teaching philosophy, and motivation checks for teaching roles. These sub-themes were further grouped under major themes such as assessment of exam competence, monitoring learning progress, and evaluating professional readiness, which are higher-order conceptualisations of the data. The themes document the multi-layered nature of self-assessment as both a social and individual process within the teacher education context. Based on the Charmaz constructivist disposition (Charmaz, 2014),

the analysis tried to rest on the experiences of the participants, besides coming up with a theoretical standpoint on the role of self-assessment as a source of professional growth among preservice English teachers.

The researcher conducting the interviews was also the course instructor. Because this dual role may have influenced participants' responses, particular efforts were made to reduce social desirability bias and researcher influence during the data collection process. Participants were repeatedly assured that honest and critical responses were welcomed and that the study focused on understanding their authentic experiences rather than evaluating their performance. In addition, reflective field notes were maintained throughout the research process to support researcher reflexivity and awareness of potential bias.

Table 1
Coding Matrix of the Interviews with Preservice English Teachers (Self-Assessment Focus)

Major Theme	Sub-theme	Example Quote	Interpretation / Analytic Memo
Assessment of Exam Competence	Accuracy in exam performance	<i>"The speed essay was close to the teacher certification exam, so I could check how well I could produce concise and accurate responses under pressure."</i>	Self-assessment centres on exam-specific performance, linking classroom practice to institutional standards.
	Time management assessment	<i>"Through the repeated practice under exam-like conditions, I could measure my progress in managing time effectively."</i>	Learners focus on measurable progress in efficiency, framing skill improvement as exam-readiness.
Monitoring Learning Progress	Identifying weaknesses	<i>"Weekly formative assessments enabled me to evaluate my performance and identify specific weaknesses."</i>	Learners use assessment tasks to monitor progress and diagnose gaps in knowledge and skills.
	Using feedback	<i>"Based on the professor's feedback, I analysed which parts of my work needed revision and set specific goals for the next task."</i>	Feedback is considered a self-assessment tool, guiding performance adjustments.
Evaluating Professional Readiness	Clarity of teaching philosophy	<i>"Writing my teaching philosophy helped me to evaluate how clearly I could set my pedagogic goals."</i>	Self-assessment encompasses the ability to express professional goals, from content mastery to pedagogical clarity.
	Motivation checks for teaching role	<i>"I assessed my motivation to become a teacher and how well I</i>	Learners measure their motivation levels as an indicator of readiness

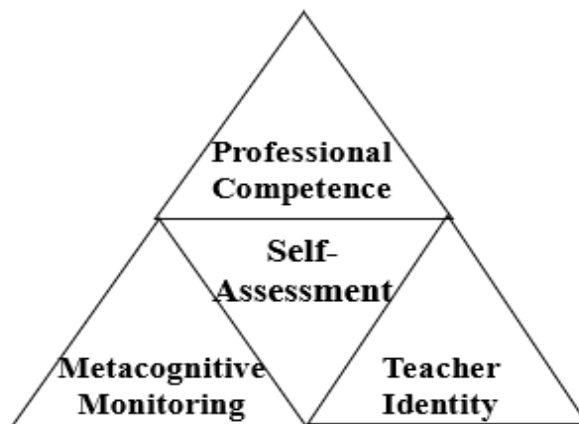
Major Theme	Sub-theme	Example Quote	Interpretation / Analytic Memo
		<i>could connect this to guiding for future teaching students."</i>	future teaching responsibilities.

Findings and Discussion

A qualitative analysis of the collected data reveals several dimensions of how self-assessment was experienced and articulated. Three major themes emerged: 1) professional competence for exam preparation, 2) metacognitive monitoring of learning, and 3) evaluating professional readiness as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1

Three Dimensions of Self-Assessment



Professional Competence for Exam Preparation

A major theme was the strong correlation between classroom practices and the exam-oriented performance assessment. Such activities as speed essays, presentations, and microteaching were regarded as true practice for the certification exam. The interviewed participants Two participants said that these activities helped them to check their level of English proficiency, time management, and develop logical arguments. For example, PSTs 1 and 2 described:

The speed essay was close to the teacher certification exam, so I could check how well I could produce concise and accurate responses under pressure. (PST 1, interview translated)

Through repeated practice under exam-like conditions, I could measure my progress in managing time effectively. (PST 2, reflection note)

PSTs 1 and 2 emphasised that the time constraints involved in speed essay writing functioned as an important form of practical training for examination-oriented writing tasks. They reported that limited writing time in class encouraged them to develop more strategic approaches to organizing and prioritising their ideas before beginning to write. Rather than writing immediately, they became more conscious of planning, structure, and efficiency during the composing process. For example, PST 4 explained:

When I wrote the speed essay in less than 30 minutes, I would spend a lot of time planning. The awareness enabled me to change my approach. (PST 4, interview translated)

This account illustrates how the time restriction prompted the participant to engage in more deliberate self-monitoring. PST 4's comment suggests that the pressure of limited time increased awareness of the importance of organisation and strategic preparation. Examinations are strongly associated with timed performance and accuracy in the Korean context. In this sense, PST 4 interpreted timed writing as an opportunity to develop more effective planning strategies for examination-oriented contexts.

Similarly, two participants described how oral presentation activities contributed to their ability to organise and communicate ideas more clearly and logically. Participants perceived these experiences as beneficial preparation for the oral components of teacher certification examinations and professional communication. PST 8 noted:

Presentation helped me to put my ideas together in a logical and concise order and present it in a clear and understandable way, which is significant in the oral part of the exam. (PST 8, reflection note)

This reflection indicates that PST 8 associated presentation activities with the development of organizational and communicative skills necessary for oral assessment situations. PST 8 seemed to have strong presentation skills in class and often stated that people need to have confidence when speaking in public. PST 8 also emphasised the importance of arranging ideas coherently and expressing them concisely under performance-oriented conditions.

These findings suggest that participants viewed both timed writing and presentation activities as opportunities to develop practical strategic skills related to examination performance, including planning, organization, conciseness, and clarity of communication. They are consistent with Boud's (1995) argument that self-assessment allows learners to bridge the gap between academic performance and external assessment standards. Rehearsing under exam-like conditions allowed students to participate in what Biggs (1999) defines as constructive alignment, in which learning activities are similar to those of the assessment, and thus performance skills are required to certify strengthening performance skills.

A case of how self-assessment can be used to change testing fear to a positive attitude of self-control is the coordination of classroom functions and certification

standards. Andrade (2010) demonstrates that self-assessment results in the development of a more favourable view of assessment standards, which is evident here as students internalise the assessment performance standards. Recent research studies indicate such a relationship between systematic self-assessment and test preparation. Karaman (2024) suggests that rubrics can be more open and allow students a chance to assess their performance more responsibly and accurately. Jalani et al. (2021) found that preservice teachers have more demands in their pedagogical knowledge and fewer demands in their technological integration, and guided self-assessment is an imposed requirement to identify their weak points. All this adds to the argument that exam-consistent exercises, which involve self-assessment, contribute to certification exam preparation and the increase of professional competence.

Metacognitive Monitoring of Learning

The second theme of self-assessment is associated with metacognitive awareness of student progress. Rather than thinking abstractly, the participants applied self-assessment as a scientific means of weakness diagnosis and controlling future learning behaviours. These two excerpts illustrate reflective self-regulation and the use of feedback for improvement:

I have been able to notice that I did not have concrete examples in my essays frequently. Since I noticed this trend, I made myself deliberately add supporting evidence. (PST 1, reflection note)

Based on the professor's feedback, I analysed which parts of my work needed revision and set specific goals for the next task. (PST 2, interview translated)

These reflections show how PSTs 1 and 2 became aware of their weaknesses in essay writing and intentionally modified subsequent writing strategies to address the issue. The emphasis on identifying patterns and making deliberate adjustments suggests an increased awareness of the writing process. Other participants also described self-assessment as a process of identifying causes of performance difficulties and monitoring areas requiring improvement. For example, PSTs 3 and 5 stated:

Self-assessment helped me to reflect on the reason why I lost points. (PST 3, interview translated)

Weekly formative assessments enabled me to evaluate my performance and identify specific weaknesses. (PST 5, reflection note)

Three participants emphasised the role of detailed formative feedback in supporting ongoing reflection and improvement. PST 7 explained:

The detailed comments on my reflections helped me recognize patterns of weakness, like grammar accuracy, so I could plan how to improve step by step. (PST 7, interview translated)

These claims invoke self-assessment as a process of self-regulation and comply with a description of reflective practice by Richards and Farrell (2005) as a metacognitive cycle. This is similar to the self-regulated learning model by Zimmerman (2002), in which one of the processes used to facilitate the establishment of the goals, monitoring them, and modifying the lesson plans. When it comes to comparing self-report and external feedback, it also becomes evident that the formative feedback enables students to become self-regulated learners as theorised by Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick (2006). Huang (2022) studied self-assessment in EFL and found that self-assessment is closely related to self-regulation and self-efficacy. Yigletu (2023) also discovered that assessment practices professional learning facilitated the effective observation of learning by teachers and the integration of self- and peer-assessment into the formative assessment cultures. The findings indicate that self-assessment is a metacognitive strategy and professional habit that enhances the adaptation, self-regulation, and improvement of the learners.

The Emergence of Teacher Identity as Professional Readiness

Beyond exam preparation, students used assignments to assess their broader professional readiness. Writing a teaching philosophy, for example, was described as a task that required not only self-expression but also evaluation of their ability to articulate instructional goals clearly. For example, PST 6 explained:

Writing my teaching philosophy allowed me to evaluate how clearly I could set my goals. (PST 6, interview translated)

This excerpt suggests that PST 6 used the teaching philosophy assignment as an opportunity to clarify and organize personal instructional goals. PST 6 engaged in reflection about how coherently their educational beliefs could be expressed. PST 7 reflected on how self-assessment prompted consideration of professional responsibility in relation to future teaching practice:

Self-assessment helped me to think about the possibility of passing the exam and to wonder whether I am ready to accept the responsibility towards students. (PST 7, reflection note)

This statement indicates that PST 7 connected self-assessment experiences with broader reflections on preparedness for the responsibilities associated with teaching. PST 7's comment specifically emphasises awareness of professional responsibility rather than merely examination performance. PST 9 described evaluating personal motivation in relation to future teaching roles:

I assessed my motivation to become a teacher and how well I could connect this to guiding students. (PST 9, reflection note)

This reflection illustrates how self-assessment activities encouraged PST 9 to consider the relationship between personal motivation and the practical role of supporting students as a future educator. Four participants also described becoming more aware of discrepancies between their abstract teaching beliefs and actual instructional choices during practice-based activities. For instance, two participants commented on the gap between their abstract teaching beliefs and actual instructional practices during microteaching:

Using microteaching, I was able to monitor the extent to which my teaching beliefs were actually in my teaching choices. (PST 3, reflection note)

When I wrote my teaching philosophy, I knew that I was abstract in what I thought about. I had to relate them to the strategies in the classroom. (PST 4, interview translated)

These examples indicate that the development of self-assessment has also expanded to the assessment of professional identity and motivation, which solidifies the connection between academic activities and teaching responsibilities in the future (Brookfield, 2017; Farrell, 2015). The practice of building a teaching philosophy reminds me of the concept proposed by Schön (1983), according to which reflection-on-action is one of the tools of influencing professional development. Preparedness is also motivationally assessed. As Brookfield (2017) notes, reflective practice in the teaching process is concerned with doubting one of the technical capabilities and values, and assumptions of the choices made during the teaching.

Self-assessment of motivation and professional preparedness that appeared in this study exemplifies early recognition of teaching as a value-based process. In addition, Beauchamp and Thomas (2009) highlighted that reflection can play a central role in identity-making and that methodical engagement in self-assessment will provide the framework within which novice teachers can present themselves as professionals. This is in line with the findings of Jalani et al. (2021) that preservice teachers require systematic opportunities to understand where gaps exist in the profession. Yigletu et al.'s (2023) study also claims that assessment-related professional development programs can serve the purpose of teaching preservice teachers how to evaluate their performance and their professional identity critically. In order to put the teaching philosophy and motivational assessment into the context of the entire concept of professional readiness, this study is pegged to the idea that, as Huang (2022) suggests, self-assessment leads to outcomes of performance in the short term and the emergence of professional identity in the long term.

The present findings demonstrate that preservice teachers perceived self-assessment as a reflective learning tool and a practical mechanism for preparing for institutional evaluation and teacher certification examinations. Participants connected reflective activities, formative assessments, and feedback practices to examination readiness, strategic learning, and professional accountability. This dual

orientation toward both learning and examination performance appears to distinguish the current findings from several previous studies on self-assessment in EFL and teacher education contexts. For example, Huang (2022) pointed out that self-assessment promoted self-monitoring, goal setting, reflective thinking, and instructional improvement through strategies such as self-observation, reflective feedback, and self-evaluation. It showed that self-assessment increased teachers' awareness of their instructional effectiveness and professional self-regulation. Similarly, participants in the present study described how reflective assessment activities enabled them to identify weaknesses, revise learning strategies, and monitor their progress.

Likewise, Yigletu et al.'s (2023) study on assessment for learning investigated preservice primary mathematics teachers in Ethiopia, focusing on assessment for learning practices. Their findings revealed that formative assessment practices scaffolded learners' planning, monitoring, revision, and self-reflection processes. Similar patterns emerged in the present study, as participants described using feedback and reflective activities to regulate their learning and prepare strategically for future teaching assessments. While Yigletu focused primarily on measurable improvements in self-regulated learning skills through structured intervention, the present study further demonstrates how preservice teachers personally interpreted these practices as preparation for high-stakes assessment environments and future certification expectations.

In addition, the current findings resonate with broader discussions of teacher identity and reflective practice in teacher education. Whereas Jalani et al.'s (2021) study emphasised the limited opportunities available for preservice teachers to develop integrated TPACK knowledge, the current findings reveal how participants attempted to bridge this gap through reflective self-assessment, microteaching, and classroom-based evaluation tasks. Beauchamp and Thomas (2009) argued that teacher identity is shaped through reflection, contextual experiences, and the negotiation of professional expectations. Their study emphasized that reflection allows preservice teachers to connect personal beliefs with professional roles and institutional demands. In the present study, participants similarly interpreted self-assessment activities as opportunities to monitor themselves, suggesting that assessment practices contributed to skill development and the formation of professional identity as accountable future teachers. The present study contributes to existing literature by showing that self-assessment in EFL teacher education was understood as a reflective learning process, a mechanism for self-regulated improvement, and a strategy for navigating examination-oriented and institutionally regulated teacher education contexts.

Self-assessment does not necessarily need to be an introspective process, but a systematic and practical effort to bring the short-term coursework to bear on the demands of the long-term career. It means that initiating self-assessment in teacher education is helpful in the context of the professional formation of future teachers, enabling preservice teachers to be able to critically and systematically evaluate their own professional development. Self-assessment endows the preservice teachers with effective performance outcomes and the development of professional dispositions, goals, and motivations.

Conclusion

This study examines the experiences of preservice teachers and their perceptions of self-assessment of their microteaching during teacher education. It has been found that self-assessment may lead to three dimensions, such as support in the development of professional competence in exam preparation, which leads to the metacognitive monitoring of learning, and support in the development of teacher identity. They demonstrated that self-assessment is an important tool in examining the immediate learning outcomes and controlling the developmental processes that led to the academic, professional, and personal development of the participants of the study.

The present study contributes to the literature on reflective practice and self-assessment by demonstrating that self-assessment in teacher education is a practice deeply shaped by institutional and examination-oriented contexts. Previous studies have largely conceptualised self-assessment as a mechanism for promoting learner autonomy, self-regulation, and reflective growth (Andrade & Du, 2007; Zimmerman, 2008). While the current findings support these functions, they reveal that preservice teachers strategically employed reflective practices to negotiate the demands of a highly competitive teacher certification environment in South Korea. In this sense, self-assessment functioned as a pedagogical tool for learning and a form of examination-oriented professional adaptation.

Although to a certain degree this study has provided constructive information about the self-assessment practice of preservice English teachers, there are several limitations. First, the study was conducted on a small sample of nine people in a single teacher education program in South Korea. The findings may not apply to preservice educators or other cultural and institutional backgrounds in general. The findings should be read as circumstantial and descriptive rather than representative. Second, it might have led to social desirability bias since they used self-reported data gathered via semi-structured interviews. The participants may have talked about the most positive aspects of self-assessment or downplayed the challenges to meet the perceived expectations of the instructor or researcher. Third, the research targeted students at a single point in time, mainly when they finish their homework and when they are undertaking their exams. A longitudinal follow-up of preservice teachers during their teaching careers may offer a better perspective on the longitudinal growth and development of self-assessment practices in relation to their profession.

The study highlights the value of creating reflective activities sensitive to the local educational contexts and fostering transferable skills of lifelong learning by foregrounding preservice teachers' voices. Future studies may broaden this line of inquiry through a cross-cultural or institutional comparison of reflective practices and thus add to the existing body of knowledge about the role of reflection as a pillar of reflection and teacher training.

Research Ethics

The study was conducted according to the guidelines of the Declaration of Helsinki and approved by the Institutional Review Board (or Ethics Committee) of Suncheon National University (Protocol Code: 1040173-202407-HR-023-05 (approval date: 13 August 2024)).

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