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A METHODOLOGY FOR DEVELOPING CRITICAL THINKING IN PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS THROUGH MICROTEACHING, PEER FEEDBACK, AND REFLECTIVE JOURNALING

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Abstract
This article presents a methodology for developing critical thinking in pre-service teachers through the integration of microteaching, peer feedback, and reflective journaling. Drawing on selected studies in teacher education, the methodology connects instructional practice with evidence-based analysis, collaborative dialogue, and individual reflection. Its instructional cycle comprises lesson planning, microteaching, structured peer observation, feedback discussion, reflective writing, and lesson revision. Peer feedback focuses on observable teaching events, the justification of interpretations, and actionable recommendations. Reflective journaling guides students in examining assumptions, evaluating alternative explanations, and explaining changes to their instructional decisions. Assessment criteria address problem identification, evidence evaluation, consideration of alternatives, and reasoned judgment. The article explains how these components can be organised within seminars and practical courses at pedagogical universities in Uzbekistan. Its contribution is a coordinated instructional framework that makes pre-service teachers' reasoning visible and connects reflection with purposeful improvements in subsequent teaching.

Keywords: Pre-service teachers, critical thinking, microteaching, peer feedback, reflective journaling, teacher education, evidence-based reasoning, instructional judgment.

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BO‘LAJAK PEDAGOGLARDA TANQIDIY FIKRLASHNI RIVOJLANTIRISHNING MIKRODARS, O‘ZARO FIKR-MULOHAZA VA REFLEKSIV KUNDALIK ASOSIDAGI METODIKASI

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Annotatsiya

Maqolada mikrodars, o‘zaro fikr-mulohaza va refleksiv kundalikni integratsiyalash orqali bo‘lajak pedagoglarda tanqidiy fikrlashni rivojlantirish metodikasi taqdim etiladi. Pedagogik ta’limga oid tanlangan tadqiqotlarga tayangan holda, metodika o‘qitish amaliyotini dalillarga asoslangan tahlil, hamkorlikdagi muloqot va individual refleksiya bilan bog‘laydi. Uning o‘quv sikli darsni rejalashtirish, mikrodars o‘tish, tengdoshlarning tuzilmali kuzatuvi, fikr-mulohazalarni muhokama qilish, refleksiv yozuv va darsni qayta ishlab chiqishni qamrab oladi. O‘zaro fikr-mulohaza kuzatiladigan pedagogik hodisalar, talqinlarni asoslash va amalda qo‘llanadigan tavsiyalarga yo‘naltiriladi. Refleksiv kundalik talabalarni taxminlarini tekshirish, muqobil izohlarni baholash va pedagogik qarorlaridagi o‘zgarishlarni tushuntirishga yo‘naltiradi. Baholash mezonlari muammoni aniqlash, dalillarni baholash, muqobil variantlarni hisobga olish va asoslangan mulohaza yuritishni qamrab oladi. Maqolada ushbu tarkibiy qismlarni O‘zbekiston pedagogika oliy ta’lim muassasalaridagi seminar va amaliy kurslarda tashkil etish yo‘llari tushuntiriladi. Ishning hissasi bo‘lajak pedagoglarning fikrlash jarayonini namoyon etadigan hamda refleksiyani keyingi darslarni maqsadli takomillashtirish bilan bog‘laydigan muvofiqlashtirilgan metodik tizimdan iborat.

Kalit so‘zlar: bo‘lajak pedagoglar, tanqidiy fikrlash, mikrodars, o‘zaro fikr-mulohaza, refleksiv kundalik, pedagogik ta’lim, dalillarga asoslangan fikrlash, pedagogik mulohaza.

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Аннотация

В статье представлена методика развития критического мышления у будущих педагогов посредством интеграции микрообучения, взаимной обратной связи и рефлексивного дневника. Опираясь на выбранные исследования в области педагогического образования, методика связывает практику преподавания с анализом на основе доказательств, совместным обсуждением и индивидуальной рефлексией. Учебный цикл включает планирование урока, проведение микрозанятия, структурированное наблюдение со стороны однокурсников, обсуждение обратной связи, рефлексивное письмо и доработку урока. Взаимная обратная связь направлена на наблюдаемые педагогические события, обоснование интерпретаций и практически применимые рекомендации. Рефлексивный дневник помогает студентам проверять предположения, оценивать альтернативные объяснения и раскрывать причины изменения педагогических решений. Критерии оценивания охватывают выявление проблемы, оценку доказательств, рассмотрение альтернатив и обоснованное суждение. В статье объясняются способы организации этих компонентов на семинарских и практических занятиях в педагогических вузах Узбекистана. Вклад работы заключается в согласованной методической системе, которая делает рассуждения будущих педагогов доступными для анализа и связывает рефлексию с целенаправленным совершенствованием последующего преподавания.

Ключевые слова: будущие педагоги, критическое мышление, микрообучение, взаимная обратная связь, рефлексивный дневник, педагогическое образование, мышление на основе доказательств, педагогическое суждение.

INTRODUCTION

Preparing future teachers requires more than helping students acquire subject knowledge and reproduce established instructional procedures. Teachers must interpret classroom situations, evaluate competing explanations, respond to learners' needs, and justify decisions under conditions of uncertainty. Critical

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thinking therefore belongs at the centre of teacher education. For pedagogical universities in Uzbekistan, a practical challenge is to translate this broad educational priority into learning activities that make reasoning visible, discussable, and open to improvement throughout professional preparation.

Critical thinking involves examining assumptions, assessing evidence, considering alternatives, and reaching judgments that remain responsive to new information. In teacher education, these processes connect directly with lesson planning, classroom communication, assessment, and reflection on teaching. A student may deliver a fluent explanation yet overlook evidence of misunderstanding. Similarly, an engaging activity may fail to support its intended learning objective. Preparing teachers to recognise these discrepancies requires opportunities to analyse both instructional choices and the reasoning supporting them.

Microteaching provides a focused setting for such analysis. By planning and delivering a short lesson to peers, pre-service teachers encounter manageable teaching demands and receive evidence about their decisions. However, performing a short lesson does not automatically produce careful reasoning. Its educational value depends on what participants observe, how they interpret events, and whether subsequent revisions address identifiable problems. Connecting microteaching with structured peer feedback and reflective journaling offers a way to organise these processes within a coherent instructional cycle.

Peer feedback introduces perspectives that the student teacher may not recognise during instruction. Observers can identify unclear questions, unsupported explanations, unequal participation, or mismatches between objectives and assessment. For feedback to support critical thinking, comments should distinguish observation from interpretation and connect recommendations with specific evidence. Reflective journaling extends this dialogue through individual writing. It invites student teachers to reconsider initial assumptions, evaluate feedback, explain their choices, and formulate changes that can be examined during another teaching attempt.

Relevant scholarship supports examining these connections. Önal's study addresses the development of critical thinking skills, dispositions, and standards

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through targeted instruction. Baroudi, Aoun, and Hamam investigate feedback directed towards improving future assignments. Tan and colleagues explore a microteaching model connecting practice, feedback, and journals. Bubikova-Moan, Ferguson, and Andresen emphasise conceptual clarity in teacher education research, while Zhao and Ai examine psychological characteristics associated with critical thinking disposition. Together, these studies inform an approach connecting instructional performance with evidence, dialogue, and reflection.

This article develops a methodology integrating microteaching, peer feedback, and reflective journaling for pre-service teacher education. Its central proposition is that critical thinking should be embedded in the decisions students make before, during, and after teaching. The methodology specifies an instructional cycle, feedback procedures, journal prompts, and assessment criteria that can guide university seminars and teaching practice preparation. Particular attention is given to adaptation within Uzbekistan's pedagogical universities, where tasks must fit course objectives, available resources, and students' developing professional experience. The article brings these components together to support reasoned instructional judgment and purposeful revision of teaching through repeated opportunities to plan, teach, analyse, and improve across different subjects.

METHODS

The methodology was developed through a focused analysis of five selected articles addressing critical thinking in teacher education, prospective feedback, microteaching, reflective writing, and critical thinking disposition. The analysis examined how each study defined its central concepts, organised learning activities, used evidence, and assessed outcomes. Particular attention was given to relationships between teaching experience, dialogue, and reflection. These relationships informed the design of an instructional cycle suitable for university seminars and practical courses preparing students for school teaching.

Pedagogical modelling connected the three instructional components with four dimensions of critical thinking: identifying problems, evaluating evidence, considering alternatives, and justifying decisions. Microteaching supplies an observable teaching episode; peer feedback introduces interpretations that require

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examination; reflective journaling supports individual reconsideration and planning. The cycle is organised around planning, teaching, observation, dialogue, writing, and revision. Each stage produces material that students can revisit, allowing the relationship between an initial decision and a subsequent adjustment to be traced.

Before microteaching, students select one learning objective and prepare a short lesson lasting approximately ten minutes. They explain why the chosen activity should support that objective and anticipate a possible learning difficulty. Peers receive an observation sheet directing attention to questions, explanations, learner responses, and assessment opportunities. The teacher educator demonstrates how to record an observable event separately from an interpretation. Participants practise this distinction using a brief sample episode before observing their classmates' teaching.

During microteaching, observers record specific statements, actions, and responses relevant to the lesson objective. Recording the session is optional; written observation notes provide an accessible alternative. Following the lesson, the student teacher briefly explains the intended approach and identifies one decision requiring examination. Peers then discuss observations using a sequence of evidence, interpretation, question, and recommendation. The student teacher compares comments, requests clarification, and identifies suggestions that warrant adoption, modification, or rejection, explaining the reasons for each choice.

Reflective journaling follows the feedback discussion. Students describe a significant teaching decision, identify evidence that supports or challenges it, consider another explanation, and propose a revision. Prompts ask what happened, why the initial response seemed appropriate, what peers noticed, and what should change next time. Entries should explain reasoning rather than merely recount events. At the following session, students revise and reteach the selected lesson segment, enabling them to examine whether the adjustment addresses the previously identified problem.

Assessment combines lesson plans, observation notes, feedback contributions, journal entries, and revised teaching decisions. A shared rubric describes emerging, developing, and well-supported performance across the four critical

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thinking dimensions. The educator evaluates the quality of reasoning rather than the number of comments or the length of writing. Individual journal entries complement group discussion, while comparison of initial and revised plans makes changes in justification visible. Implementation within Uzbekistan's pedagogical universities should accommodate course schedules, language of instruction, and available materials. Students are informed about observation procedures, respectful feedback expectations, and the handling of recordings. Classroom examples should protect personal information, and participation arrangements should support equitable opportunities to teach, observe, respond, and reflect in turn.

RESULTS

The methodological development produced an integrated instructional framework in which microteaching, peer feedback, and reflective journaling perform distinct but connected functions. Microteaching generates a teaching episode for analysis, feedback brings alternative perspectives into discussion, and journaling requires the student teacher to formulate an individual interpretation. The framework links these activities through a common focus on instructional decisions. Its output is a cycle that turns classroom performance into material for examining evidence, assumptions, alternatives, and possible improvements.

A central feature of the framework is the decision record. Before teaching, students identify an instructional choice, explain its purpose, and state what learner response would indicate progress towards the lesson objective. After teaching, they compare this expectation with observation notes and peer comments. The journal then records whether the explanation remains convincing and what revision follows. This record connects planning and reflection, helping the educator distinguish a change in activity from a change supported by reasoned analysis.

The peer feedback procedure specifies four connected moves: describe evidence, offer an interpretation, ask a clarifying question, and suggest an adjustment. For example, an observer might note that a teacher answered a question immediately after asking it. The interpretation could concern limited thinking time, while the question explores the teacher's intention. A recommendation might propose a

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pause followed by paired discussion. The student teacher evaluates this suggestion against the lesson objective and the responses observed, rather than accepting it because a peer offered it.

The reflective journal provides a complementary structure for examining decisions. Its prompts connect an event with an initial assumption, evidence, an alternative explanation, and a planned adjustment. An entry might examine why several learners remained silent during questioning. Instead of treating silence as proof of low motivation, the writer considers task clarity, language demands, prior knowledge, and response time. The proposed adjustment then targets one explanation and identifies what evidence should be collected during reteaching.

The assessment framework translates critical thinking into observable features of students' work. Problem identification concerns the precision of the issue selected for analysis. Evidence evaluation concerns the relevance and credibility of observations used to support an interpretation. Consideration of alternatives concerns the fair examination of competing explanations or instructional options. Justification concerns the connection between the selected response, its supporting reasons, and anticipated consequences. These dimensions permit consistent attention to reasoning across lesson plans, feedback exchanges, and journals without reducing teaching quality to presentation fluency.

The framework also establishes a practical sequence for university implementation. A seminar introduces observation and feedback expectations; small groups complete the teaching cycle; individual journals document reasoning; and a session revisits selected decisions through reteaching. Written notes allow implementation where recording equipment is unavailable. Subject-specific examples can be drawn from students' teaching specialisations, while shared assessment criteria preserve a common focus on critical thinking. The resulting materials comprise a lesson planning template, observation sheet, feedback protocol, journal prompts, and assessment rubric. Together, these resources provide a basis for organising teaching practice preparation and examining how students explain and revise their instructional choices.

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DISCUSSION

Integrating microteaching, peer feedback, and reflective journaling places critical thinking within the decisions of learning to teach. The contribution lies in connecting activities that can otherwise remain separate: performing a lesson, receiving comments, and completing a written reflection. The proposed cycle gives these activities an object of inquiry, namely an instructional decision supported by evidence. This connection helps explain how practice can become an occasion for examining reasoning rather than simply rehearsing a teaching technique.

Microteaching provides the setting required for focused analysis. Allen and Eve established its place in teacher preparation, while Arsal examined its relationship with critical thinking dispositions. Tan and colleagues extended attention to connections among practice, feedback, and journals. The present methodology builds on this direction by requiring students to identify a decision before teaching and revisit its justification afterwards. The emphasis is therefore not on delivering an impressive miniature lesson, but on explaining how instructional choices respond to learners and objectives.

Feedback becomes educationally useful when students interpret and apply it. Hattie and Timperley discuss how feedback effects depend on its form and focus. Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick connect feedback with self-regulated learning, while Boud and Molloy emphasise learners' participation in judging their work. These perspectives support treating peer comments as claims to examine. Students should request evidence, compare interpretations, and explain their response. Topping and van Zundert and colleagues further support preparing students for peer assessment rather than assuming that useful feedback emerges spontaneously.

Reflective journaling contributes a space for processing this dialogue. Rodgers characterises reflection as disciplined inquiry, and Hatton and Smith distinguish forms of reflection in teacher education. Lee and Kember provide approaches to examining reflective thinking in written work. These contributions support journal prompts that move beyond description towards reasons, alternatives, and implications. However, reflective depth should not be confused with polished English or lengthy writing. Where language proficiency varies, educators can

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assess the coherence of reasoning separately from linguistic accuracy and permit an appropriate working language.

The distinction between critical thinking skills and disposition also matters. Önal addresses both dimensions, while Zhao and Ai examine emotional intelligence and resilience in relation to disposition. A student may recognise weak evidence yet hesitate to question a respected peer. Respectful disagreement, opportunities to reconsider decisions, and feedback directed at teaching choices can support participation. Abrami and colleagues' synthesis and Halpern's account of transfer further suggest making thinking processes explicit. Ennis's discussion of subject specificity encourages connecting shared reasoning criteria with the knowledge requirements of particular teaching subjects.

For pedagogical universities in Uzbekistan, implementation should begin with course objectives and manageable teaching tasks. Small groups, rotating roles, and written observation notes offer practical ways to organise participation without requiring equipment. Mann and colleagues' review of reflection in professional education offers a useful comparative perspective, while its different disciplinary context calls for careful adaptation. Sustained use should connect each journal entry with another teaching opportunity. This continuity gives reflection a practical destination and allows students to examine whether revised decisions address the learning problems they identified.

CONCLUSION

Developing critical thinking in pre-service teachers requires learning experiences that connect professional action with the examination of its underlying reasons. The methodology presented in this article organises microteaching, peer feedback, and reflective journaling around that connection. Each component contributes to a shared process: students plan an instructional response, observe its consequences, discuss competing interpretations, and determine what should change. Critical thinking becomes part of the work of teaching rather than an additional topic detached from classroom decisions.

The instructional cycle begins with a clear learning objective and an explicit explanation of a selected teaching decision. Microteaching then provides a focused opportunity to examine how that decision operates in practice. Peer

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observation supplies descriptions of questions, explanations, participation, and learner responses. Feedback discussion connects these observations with interpretations and possible adjustments. Reflective journaling enables the student teacher to evaluate those interpretations individually and explain a considered response. Revision and reteaching complete the cycle by returning reflection to purposeful instructional action.

The decision record is a particularly useful organising device because it preserves the relationship between intention, evidence, and revision. It enables students to ask whether their original assumptions remain convincing and whether a proposed change addresses the identified difficulty. This approach also gives teacher educators a clearer basis for discussing professional judgment. A revised activity has educational significance when its rationale responds to evidence, acknowledges relevant alternatives, and remains connected to the intended learning objective and the needs of learners.

Peer feedback should therefore be taught as a professional practice. Students need opportunities to distinguish description from inference, formulate clarifying questions, and offer recommendations that another teacher can use. Receiving feedback also involves judgment: the student teacher compares comments and explains why a suggestion is adopted, adapted, or set aside. Reflective journals deepen this process when prompts require evidence and alternative explanations. The value of writing lies in making reasoning available for examination, rather than producing an agreeable account of an apparently successful lesson.

Assessment should maintain this focus across all stages. Problem identification, evidence evaluation, consideration of alternatives, and justification provide a common language for examining plans, feedback, journals, and revisions. Multiple forms of student work help educators recognise differences between confident presentation and carefully supported reasoning. Clear criteria also make expectations understandable to students and support more focused peer dialogue. Assessment can thereby guide the next teaching attempt while preserving attention to each student's individual contribution within collaborative learning activities.

Within Uzbekistan's pedagogical universities, the methodology can be adapted to different subject specialisations, languages of instruction, course schedules, and

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available resources. Its implementation depends chiefly on coherent task design, preparation for observation, and repeated opportunities to apply feedback. Written records provide an accessible foundation, while recordings can supplement analysis where appropriate. Teacher educators can strengthen continuity by revisiting decisions across successive sessions and connecting university tasks with teaching practice. In this way, the methodology provides a practical basis for cultivating teachers who carefully examine evidence, listen thoughtfully, justify instructional choices, and revise their practice in response to learners' needs.

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