



D4.2 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT MATERIAL FOR PRE-SERVICE TEACHER TRAINERS

D4.2 Professional development material for pre-service teacher trainers

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1. Presentation of DigitalTA methodology/pedagogical background

This proposal is a response from European training institutions to support teachers' professional development and reduce teacher attrition (Spanorriga, Tsiotakis, Jimoyiannis, 2018) in the early years of professional practice.

The proposal aligns with the framework of the EU "Common Digital Action Plan" (2021-2027) and the "Conclusions on Effective Teacher Education" (EU, 2014): "Both initial teacher education and continuing professional development for teachers must be based on sound pedagogical research and apply adult learning methods based on communities of practice, online learning, and peer learning."

From the review of the studies that precede this initiative, we have detected that one of the problems that affect the teaching staff is located in the transition period from initial training to the first years of their professional practice in the classroom. A period in which this collective cease to be teachers in training, experiencing the transition from learning to teach to teaching to learn (Herrington, Herrington, Kervin, & Ferry, 2006).

This is an important step for most young and inexperienced teachers who report feeling alone in encountering the complexities of the practices. In many cases, they are overwhelmed by the lack of resources, space, time, and the need for support to reflect on their daily activities.

According to the general context of the project, the objective of this initiative is to propose a shared development process among European countries and to define a useful tool for teacher training, taking advantage of current technological capabilities and offering quality training for all, without barriers of accessibility or social distinction.

That is, to support students and newly qualified teachers to engage in collaborative critical reflection on teaching practices. In this way, we seek to avoid conformity to dominant school practices (De Roiste et al., 2012) and engage participants in an enriching socialization process, which promotes the improvement of their practices.

The proposal focuses on the generation of knowledge, emphasizing peer-to-peer, collaborative, and networked learning based on problem solving, participation in the development of projects, joint creation of resources and materials, discussion and inquiry.

DigitalTA learning community can be adequately described in terms of three interacting variables that run through the entire process:

- Students in training, teachers and professors, as main actors of the reflective process, enter the network from the approach of training needs and the elaboration of cases for collective discussion.
- Mentors and active teachers, as the driving force behind the accompaniment, participate in the network as facilitators of collaborative reflection.
- The knowledge and contents, as communicating links, feed the network from the generation of real cases on which the reflective process and the co-creation of actions in the acting community are initiated, generating new dynamics of collaboration that

widen and feed the community.

Description of learning community members

The table below categorizes different members of the learning community within an educational platform, each serving distinct roles and responsibilities.

Table 1

Learning community members

Mentor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experienced colleague teacher (ranging from pre-primary to secondary schools) who formally or informally supports novice teachers and helps them to get used to professional work. Based on voluntary work.
Tutor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Academic/ university teacher, hired in Higher Education Institutions (HEI) Engaged in the preparation of student teachers on various courses. Supports and mentors student teachers and evaluate their practice while on placement.
Pre-service teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any student enrolled on an initial teacher education programme (teacher training/teacher preparation programme)
Newly Qualified Teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A graduate of higher education institution entitling to practice as a teacher for a period of employment of up to 5 years, usually in official or unofficial period of induction. Teachers who been out of the classroom for a long time (more than 5 years) and come back to school. Teachers with a lot of experience who are facing new challenges (e.g. new technology issues).
In service teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Educators who are currently employed in schools and actively teaching.

Note. Production from consortium

1.1. What it means to be a mentor

Mentoring has been described as a professional building experience for both mentors and mentees wherein both are regarded as ‘co-learners on a voyage of discovery’ (Patton et al. 2005): a process which is reciprocal rather than a solely one-directional mentor-to-mentee learning space (Rabin 2020; Hudson and Hudson 2018). **This foundational concept applies across different educational contexts and roles and its dynamic can be effective in any educational setting where there is a mentoring relationship, including tutors (university teachers), and school mentors.**

To ensure the efficacy of this reciprocal process, the complex level of pedagogy involved in mentoring must be acknowledged (Arnesson and Albinsson 2017); particularly the “ways in which mentees learn and the pedagogical knowledge and skills that mentor teachers need to support them to learn effectively” (Chambers et al. 2012, p. 347).

Mentoring is deemed most successful when the mentoring practices are personalised and adapted to suit the precise needs of the mentee (Hee et al. 2019; Rakicioglu-Soylemez 2014). This signals mentoring as a form of deliberative practice, as part of which, strengths are highlighted along with areas for improvement. In both cases, these are scaffolded by advising how such improvements could be achieved (Leshem 2012; Betlem, Clary and Jones 2019). This democratic approach allows thoughts, reflections, and knowledge to be consolidated by means of open dialogue, collective learning, and challenging assumptions (Mullen and Klimaitlis 2021; Arnesson and Albinsson 2017).

It is evident that the early stages of teaching can be daunting and intimidating for student teachers and NQTs, the support of a mentor may aid the socialisation process by reducing their stress levels and enabling them to maximise their learning about teaching potential (Geng et al 2017; Caires et al. 2012). Identified as the key facilitator, a mentor may also act as a ‘counsellor’ or ‘critical friend’ (Kwan and Lopez-Real 2005).

Research states that the most effective mentors are perceived as supportive, reassuring, generous with time, constructive in terms of feedback and advice on teaching in a safe learning environment, and influential in the development and shaping of professional identity (Alves et al. 2018; Bullock 2017; Hobson et al. 2009). Nikoceviq-Kurti and Saqipi (2022) add to this by stating that the quality of mentoring is enhanced when mentors display hospitality, openness to collaboration, a non-judgmental approach, space for engagement, and encouragement to take initiative.

The approach to mentoring adopted within the project aligns with the research and with the reflective practitioner model of mentoring (Maynard and Furlong 1995; Wang and Odell, 2007), which positions the mentor as critical friend and co-inquirer with the student teacher. Care, developing positive and supportive relationships, developing a sense of professional agency and critical reflection are central to the role of the mentor (Hargreaves 2003; Mooney Simmie and Moles, 2011). Rather than solely focusing on giving advice to students, the mentor, in a caring and thoughtful way, asks probing and engaging questions and prompts to encourage the student teacher to think more deeply about their practice and views. Importantly, all participants on the platform can develop learning communities through the sharing of knowledge and skills and through interactions between student teachers, NQTs, mentors and tutors. Student teachers and NQTs can benefit from a variety of enriching experiences through the structured participation of mentors on the platform.

1.2. Role of a DigitalTA mentor

- A mentor should familiarize themselves with and learn all the functionalities of the platform.
- He or she should familiarize themselves with the content already available on the platform – Case studies, experiences, and resources.
- He or she should establish contact and connect with a pre-service or newly qualified teacher and provide support where needed.
- A mentor should comment on experiences posted onto the platform in a constructive and supportive manner.
- He or she should be able to collate and upload quality resources and good practices into the platform's resource repository.

1.3. Role of the DigitalTA tutor

- Tutors provide feedback on the experiences shared by pre-service teachers, offering insights and advice to enhance learning outcomes and practical application of teaching concepts.
- They review detailed teaching experiences shared by pre-service teachers to identify those that could be developed into case studies for future training.
- Tutors need to be well-versed in available case studies and familiar with the criteria for creating new case studies and using them effectively. They use these case studies as teaching tools to illustrate real-world teaching challenges and solutions.
- They are involved in uploading high-quality educational resources and best practices. When working with pre-service teachers who upload resources, tutors perform quality control checks, so that all materials shared on the platform meet high standards of educational value and relevance.
- Tutors actively participate in chats and discussion forums on the platform. They engage directly with pre-service teachers, facilitating real-time communication, answering questions, and encouraging discussions that enhance understanding and collaboration.
- They collaborate with other tutors to share insights, strategies, and resources.
- A critical part of a tutor's role is to fully understand and utilize all functionalities of the educational platform to effectively guide and support pre-service teachers in navigating and making the best use of the platform for their learning and development.

2. A brief presentation of the process from the pedagogical principles to the platform: WP3 lessons

2.1. The pedagogical approach of the model is based on the consideration that learning derives from three main aspects:

1. **Collaborative learning:** the consideration that learning is a complex interaction of individuals who feel linked to a specific community where identification among member peers will increase. Communication based on experiences in the classrooms and the daily life of the centers will favor recognition and identification, increasing the sense of belonging of the group of participants. Collaborative learning is also enforced by the development of an intercultural and transnational learning community.
2. **Meta reflection in learning:** reflection on practice is essential for learning and continuous improvement and the construction of professional identity during periods of transition. From this we can derive the emerging concept of extended community, where each person is an author and a user at the same time. **Project propose to develop a cyclical process for the self-reflection:** the proposed reflective process is framed, among other things, around a cyclical process that encourages in-service teachers to draw on experience (what?), to consider what learning they can draw from other sources (peers, literature, etc.) (so what?), and to consider what action can emerge from the reflective process (now what?). Encourage critical reflection: The proposed reflective process encourages and inspires teachers to consider how they can transform their practice, and how that transformation can be ongoing. It also supports research-informed decision-making. Finally, the mediation of mentors for reflective learning will help to personal reflection (self-directed and/or accompanied by mentors and tutors), users will be able to go through the environment, passing through a space dedicated to the development of a personal challenge (which can also be worked on self-directed, accompanied, or at community level)
3. **Connected learning:** the reflexivity is mediated by a technological device as a valuable tool for the development of reflection at different stages of the learning process, and the digital environment is a favorable space for the construction of learning networks and the connection with other teachers who are going through similar processes.

Therefore, the project proposes the creation of a teaching/educational knowledge base, which can be continuously updated based on individual and group professional experience and emerging research, thanks to the participation of teachers in the social network of peers.

This collaborative network of reflections consists of an organized collection of knowledge open to teachers through a digital platform. A common virtual environment with free access for teachers in transition (trainee or student teachers, newly qualified teachers, beginning or in-

service teachers), school mentors, HEI teachers, and continuing education teachers, among many other professionals involved in classroom teaching

2.2. Phases of participation in the platform:

In order to illustrate the reflective process possible within the framework of the ecosystem, we have conceived four moments or phases of participation from which teachers can become part of the reflective community. Each of the phases involves a set of strategies and activities aimed at achieving the objectives of each dimension.

As with the dimensions, the phases of the model should not be considered as a single, chronological sequence since, in practice, the reflective process can begin in any of the phases and go through each of them indistinctly. The digital environment allows flexibility in time and space, which facilitates student participation in the training process.

The following is a description of the 4 phases with which the ecosystem is born, with the proviso that they may be configured as required by the participants.

1. Phase of exploration and critical understanding of reality.

In this phase, participants are invited to explore their practice based on previous experience and knowledge; analysis of the cases available in the repository; peer collaboration; consultation with mentor trainers; or participation in community discussion. Likewise, at this stage, each participant will be able to count on different resources, spaces, and tools such as case analysis, observation of teaching practices, reflective journaling, and group work, peer coaching, among others. These strategies are based on the idea that reflection on one's own practice is essential to improve the quality of teaching.

2. Dialogue phase, collaboration, and teamwork.

Dialogue and collaboration among teachers are essential to collectively build knowledge, exchange perspectives, and develop new ideas. the phase focuses on building support networks and identifying resources to address educational problems collectively. To facilitate conversation between participants (introspective; peer-to-peer or networked), various strategies will be used to encourage interactions among community members. In this sense, tools that favor communication (synchronous and asynchronous) will be made available, taking into account a wide variety of skills, media, and languages present in the community. In addition, a series of technical and methodological resources will be made available to encourage teamwork (agile methodologies); foster interaction (discussion forums, project collaboration); promote creative solutions (creation of multimedia digital materials; use of mixed reality); discussion spaces (Meeting, Zoom; incorporation of AI functions).

3. Application phase, shared reflection, and transformation of teaching practice.

In this phase, the aim is, on the one hand, for participants to apply the knowledge acquired during their reflective process in the classrooms, considered as living environments, and to evaluate their learning process, receiving feedback to improve their daily practice. To this end, various strategies will be used, such as the implementation of classroom projects, monitoring and evaluation of actions, informed feedback of evidence, or the provision of instruments to facilitate self-evaluation.

4. Finally, and in coordination with the previous phases, we find the phase of Consolidation, transfer, and communication with the community.

Documentation and dissemination of the experiences and results obtained are promoted for their subsequent implementation in other educational contexts, and the aim is for teachers to become agents of change and promoters of critical reflection in their educational environment. The main strategy developed by the platform will be to consolidate the reflective experience in a study-case, using the study case creator.

2.3. A model for interactions (the hive)

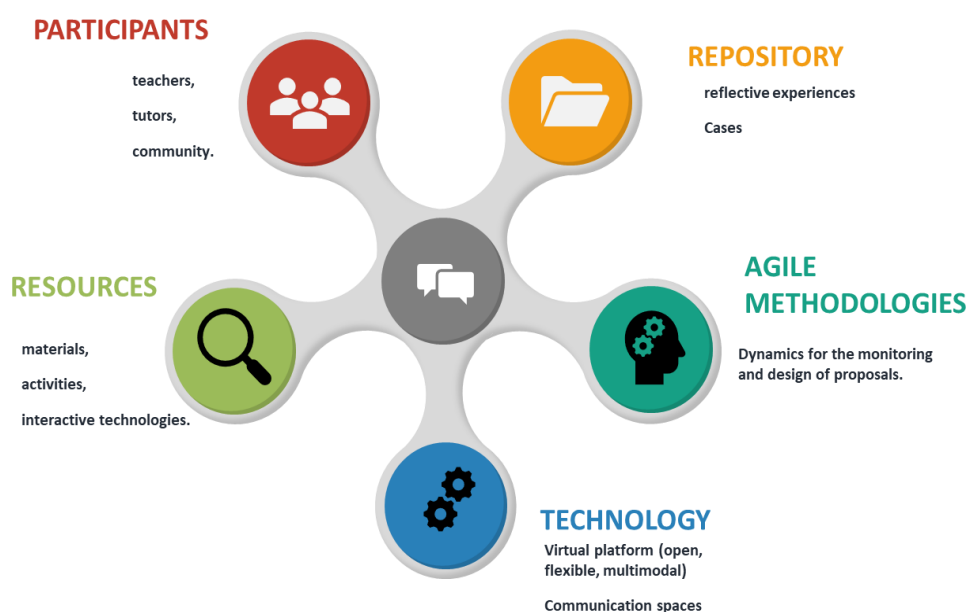
The model integrates five essential components that interact with each other.

This digital reflective cycle process supports the agency and the choice of entry of each of the users. When entering the platform, you will have a series of environments and scenarios from of which it will be possible to access spaces of reflection and experience different levels of interaction and engagement.

The model integrates five essential components that interact with each other.

Figure 1

Interactions in the designed ecosystem



Note. Own creation.

In response to these pedagogical principles the project's platform developed several modules:

- A resource repository of shared European experiences on training processes for the initial and continuous practice of teachers.
- A social network for reflection and support of teaching practices by the learning community.
- Study-cases repository for the support and improvement of teaching practices based on the analysis of case studies focused on the most relevant daily challenges of teachers in their communities of practice.
- Personal reflection (self-directed and/or accompanied by mentors and tutors), users will be able to go through the environment, passing through a space dedicated to the development of a personal challenge (which can also be worked on self-directed, accompanied, or at community level);

3. Platform user Guide

3.1. About the Teacher Academy

The Teacher Academy aims to empower educators by providing them with a supportive environment where they can learn from each other, refine their teaching methods, and ultimately improve student outcomes.

Its purpose is to create a collaborative online community for educators, where they can:

1. Share their teaching experiences, challenges, and successes.
2. Reflect on their teaching practices and engage in professional development.
3. Seek guidance, advice, and support from experienced mentors.
4. Access a database of real-world case studies and resources to enhance their teaching strategies.
5. Connect and collaborate with fellow educators from different backgrounds and levels.

3.1.1 Glossary

Table 2

Glossary

Experience	A specific instance or scenario encountered by an educator during their teaching journey. It could include challenges faced, successes achieved, innovative teaching methods used, or any other notable events or insights gained in the classroom. Experiences are shared by educators on the platform to inspire, inform, and engage with the learning community.
Case study	A real-world example or scenario that serves as a teaching tool or point of discussion. In the context of the platform, case studies consist of detailed descriptions of classroom situations, challenges, or teaching strategies, along with the outcomes and reflections associated with them. Educators can access these cases to learn from real-life examples and apply insights to their own teaching practices.
Resource	Any materials, tools, or information that educators can use to support their teaching development. This could include lesson plans, teaching guides, research articles, multimedia content, and more. Resources are valuable assets for educators to enhance their teaching methods, gain new knowledge, and stay updated on best practices in education.

Theme	An overarching topic or category that represents a major area of focus within the platform. Themes are derived from the needs analysis of the DigitalTA project and encompass broad aspects of education or teaching. Themes serve as high-level organizational structures to help users navigate and explore content related to specific areas of interest or expertise.
Tag	A specific keyword or label that users can freely assign to individual pieces of content within the platform. Tags are user-generated and represent more granular details or attributes associated with content. Users can add tags to their shared experiences, case studies, or resources to provide additional context and facilitate searching, browsing, and filtering of content. Tags may include topics covered, teaching methods used, grade levels, specific challenges addressed, or any other relevant descriptors. Users have the flexibility to create and use tags based on their unique needs and preferences.

Note. Production form the consortium.

3.1.2 In-platform guidance

While this user manual serves as a comprehensive support document for general guidance on using the Teacher Academy, we also provide in-platform guidance to enhance your user experience. Throughout the platform interface, you will encounter various forms of assistance, explanations, instructions, tooltips, and other supportive elements designed to help you navigate and interact with the platform more effectively.

These in-platform guidance features are strategically integrated into different sections of the platform to provide context-specific help and support as you explore its features and functionalities. Whether you're sharing an experience, exploring case studies, or accessing resources, you can expect to receive timely guidance and assistance to facilitate your learning journey.

Additionally, we continuously strive to improve our in-platform guidance based on user feedback and usability testing to ensure that your experience on the Teacher Academy platform remains intuitive, informative, and enjoyable.

Five main Modules for teacher's support (a quick description)

1. My experience:

The module is designed for platform participants to share their challenges and issues faced in the classroom. It provides a platform for them to articulate their specific teaching difficulties, seek advice, and receive support from other professionals within the learning community. Users can create posts, engage in discussions, and collaborate to find effective solutions.

2. Reflection Management tool:

The Reflection Management module (REFL) offers a structured approach for pre and in-service teachers to engage in self-reflection about their teaching practices. It provides tools and frameworks to guide teachers in analyzing their classroom experiences, identifying strengths and areas for improvement, and setting goals for professional growth.

3. My Tutoring:

The MyTutoring module (TUTO) is aimed at participants, providing them with an avenue to reflect on their teaching issues and challenges. They can seek assistance and guidance from experienced professionals across different education levels. This module facilitates one-on-one or group interactions, enabling pre-service teachers to receive personalized mentoring and support to enhance their teaching skills.

4. My study-cases:

The OurCases module (CASE) serves as a database of real study cases that teachers can use for their reflection process. It provides a repository of practical scenarios and challenges encountered by teachers in various educational settings. Users can access these cases, analyze them, and engage in discussions to deepen their understanding, gain insights, and develop effective teaching strategies.

5. Resource repository:

The resource repository allows sharing helpful resources with other professionals in a learning community. The repository is being built thanks to users' experiences: from the main page, participants can visit the "Resources" section to explore a diverse range of resources available on the platform, from lesson plans and teaching guides to research articles and multimedia materials. Filters and search functionality are available to narrow down your search and find resources relevant to your teaching context, subject area, or professional interests. Filter resources by theme, educational level, format, and more to discover content that aligns with your needs.

3.2. Participants in the platform

3.2.1 Registering on the Teacher Academy

To ensure a secure and personalized experience, access to the Teacher Academy requires registration and login. Follow these steps to register and unlock the full potential of the Teacher Academy:

1. Navigate to the Registration Page.
2. Select User Type and fill in the necessary data.
3. Submit the registration form.
4. Check your email for the automatically generated password.
5. Log in using your registered username and the provided password.

6. Complete your profile with any additional information.
7. Start exploring the platform!

Image 1

Registration management



Note. Picture from DigitalTA platform v1 (April 2024).

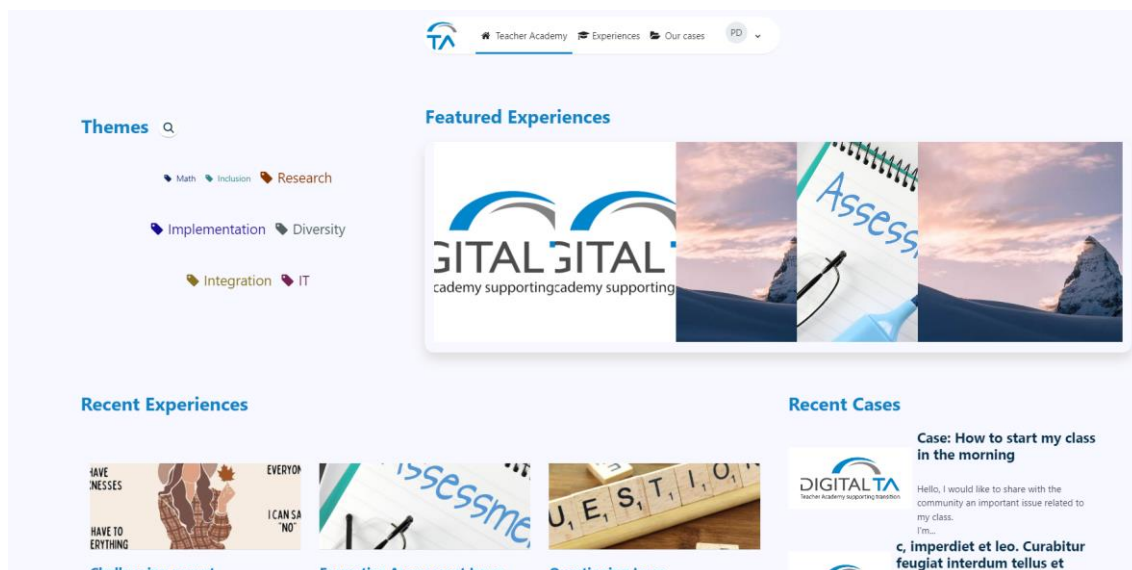
3.2.1 Navigating the main page

The main page serves as a central hub for accessing all functionalities and resources available within the Teacher Academy. Users can explore a comprehensive overview of the platform's features and options for engagement:

1. Introduction to the Teacher Academy, including a video presentation.
2. Options for user action, such as asking a question, sharing an experience, browsing existing experiences, exploring case studies, and accessing resources.
3. Categorized list of themes for filtering content based on interests or areas of expertise.
4. Showcase of the latest experiences and cases shared by educators.

Image 2

Navigating the Main Page



Note. Picture from DigitalTA platform v1 (April 2024).

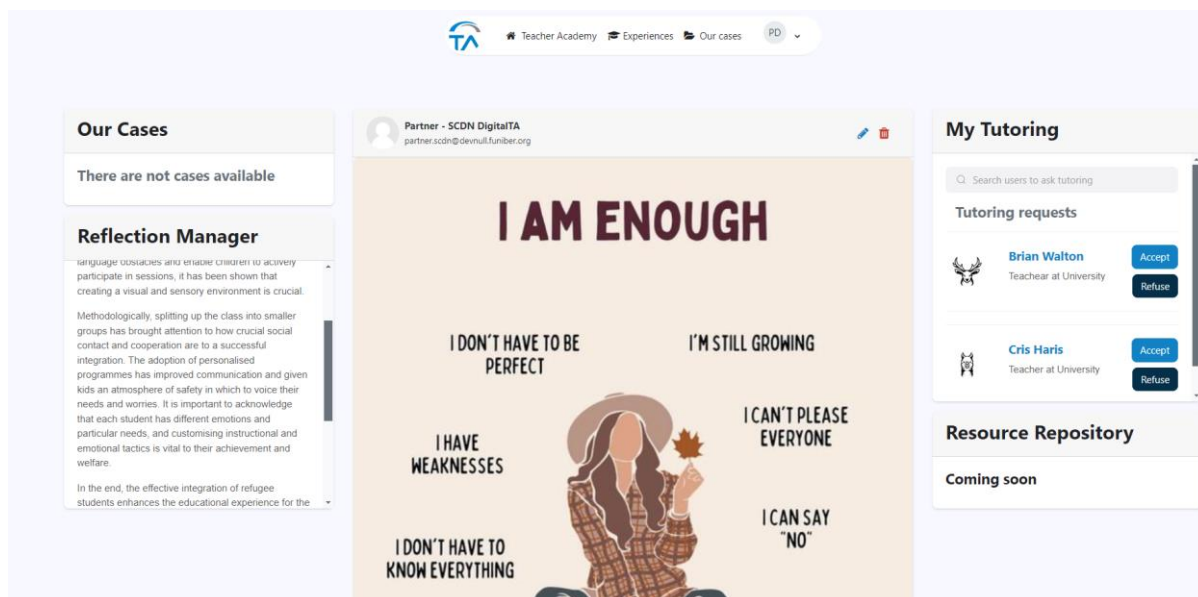
3.2.3 Asking a question or sharing an experience

Asking a question or sharing an experience on the Teacher Academy platform is a simple and straightforward process. Whether you're seeking advice, sharing insights, or initiating a discussion, this section provides guidance on how to effectively contribute to the platform's collaborative learning community:

1. On the main page, click on your desired option.
2. Provide a concise and descriptive title for your question or experience. This title should serve as a brief summary or headline for the content you are creating.
3. Enter the language, visibility settings, theme, and tags of your question or experience. Take into account that public experiences will be available for anyone on the platform.
4. Provide a detailed description or context for your question or experience. This description serves as the beginning of the reflection process and should offer additional information, background, or context related to the content you are sharing.

Image 3

An experience shared with the community



Note. Picture from DigitalTA platform v1 (April 2024).

3.2.4 Reflecting on your experience

Congratulations on creating your experience! Now it's time to reflect and grow from your teaching journey. Here are some options for reflection:

1. Exploring Existing Cases: Inspire yourself by diving into real-life cases similar to yours. Gain insights and perspectives from others who have faced similar challenges.
2. Browsing Support Resources: Explore resources tagged in the same themes as your experience. Access additional materials, tools, or guidelines to enhance your understanding and practice.
3. Seeking Accompaniment from a Tutor or Mentor: Get personalized guidance and support from a tutor or mentor. They can offer valuable insights and feedback tailored to your specific needs and challenges.
4. Engaging with the Learning Community: Join discussions, ask questions, or share your experiences with fellow educators. Collaborate and learn from others in the community.
5. Self-Reflecting: Take time to reflect on your own experience. Analyze your teaching journey, identify strengths, areas for improvement, and set goals for your professional growth.

While there's no right or wrong way to reflect, consider how each option can support your growth as an educator. The following sections provide detailed instructions on how to engage with each reflection option, empowering you to make the most of your reflective practice and professional development journey on the Teacher Academy.

3.3. Reflecting on your experience – Completing the self-reflection

Completing the self-reflection process empowers you to gain deeper insights into your teaching practice, identify areas for growth, and take proactive steps towards professional development.

3.3.1 What is the purpose of reflective practice?

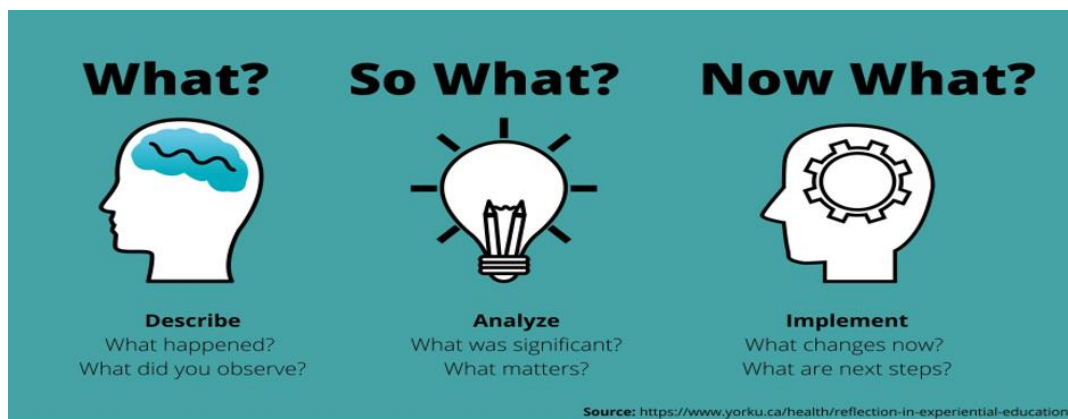
Reflective practice is a key element of teacher development. The purpose of the reflective practice element of this platform is to enable student teachers and NQTs to develop a reflective, enquiry-oriented approach to their role as educators. Participants on the platform are afforded opportunities to reflect on their attitudes and beliefs and identify their assumptions about teaching and learning which inform and guide their professional practice.

Engaging in this element of the platform with open-mindedness, wholeheartedness, and the assumption of personal responsibility (Dewey 1933) will ensure that student teachers and NQTs “can develop a greater level of self-awareness about the nature and impact of their performance, an awareness that creates opportunities for professional growth and development.” (Osterman and Kottkamp 2004, p.2).

This provides student teachers and NQTs with an opportunity to examine and reflect on their development and develop a ‘disposition to inquiry’, which will enable them to “structure or restructure actions, beliefs, knowledge and theories that inform teaching for the purpose of professional development” (Zwozdiak-Myers 2012, p.5).

Image 4

Three Key questions



STRUCTURING YOUR REFLECTIONS USING ROLFE *et al.* 2001

Three key questions:

- What?** (descriptive)
- So what?** (feeling/analysing/reasoning)
- Now what?** (exploring options/linking to action)


Note. Key questions (source : Rolfe et al. 2001).

3.3.2 How to navigate the reflective process

In the **WHAT?** section we ask that you detail what your question, issue, dilemma or success is, using the prompts below. Try to be as detailed as possible to enable mentors to support you in the reflective process.

Image 5

The What question



WHAT? (Descriptive)

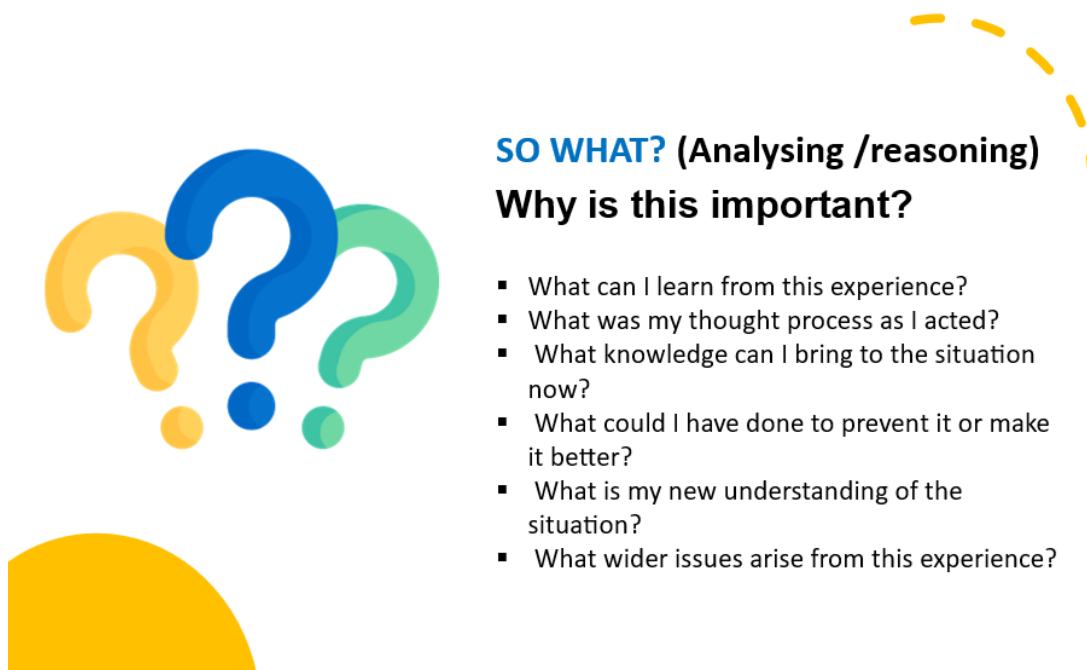
- Issue for consideration?
- What was my role?
- What was I trying to do?
- What did I/others do?
- What were the consequences for the learners? Myself? Others?
- What were the positive and negative aspects of the experience?

Note. Own creation.

In the **SO WHAT?** section, with the help of your mentors and/or peers, the aim is to engage with others to analyse, make-sense-of and draw insights from the event/issue described.

Image 6

The So what question



SO WHAT? (Analysing /reasoning)

Why is this important?

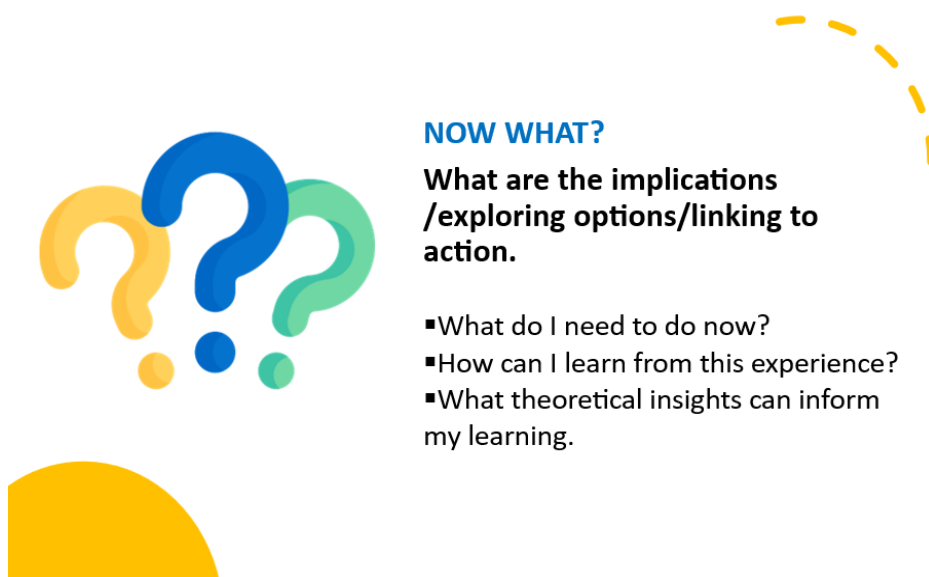
- What can I learn from this experience?
- What was my thought process as I acted?
- What knowledge can I bring to the situation now?
- What could I have done to prevent it or make it better?
- What is my new understanding of the situation?
- What wider issues arise from this experience?

Note. Own creation.

In the **NOW WHAT?** section, you are considering the next steps. Responding to the prompts below will enable you to determine solutions and apply these to your experience of teaching and learning in the future.

Image 7

The Now what question

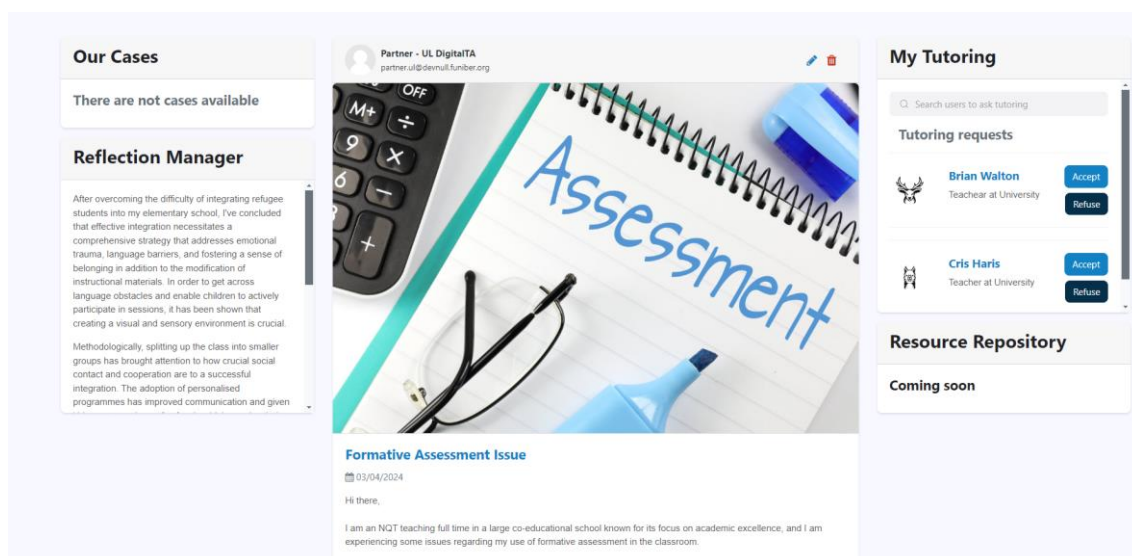


Note. Own creation.

You can address these steps by adding textual information, multimedia content, recording yourself, or supporting your contributions with resources from the platform's repository.

Image 8

Modules available for participants' reflection



Note. Picture from DigitalTA platform v1 (April 2024).

Reflecting on your experience – Looking for a tutor or a mentor

The MyTutoring module within the experience allows you to engage with tutors and mentors to enhance your reflective practice:

1. Explore a repository of experts. Filter, it based on educational level, expertise in themes, and other criteria to find the most suitable match for your needs.
2. Send a request to a tutor/mentor whom you believe can provide valuable insights and guidance for your experience. Alternatively, you may also receive requests from tutors/mentors interested in accompanying your experience.
3. Once the request is approved, you can engage in both synchronous and asynchronous interactions with your tutor/mentor, including real-time discussions, video calls, messaging, and receiving notes or feedback from the tutor/mentor.

Seeking guidance from a tutor or mentor can greatly enrich your reflective practice and professional development journey. Take advantage of this opportunity to gain valuable insights and enhance your teaching practice.

Reflecting on your experience – Interacting with the community

Engaging with the Teacher Academy community can enhance your reflective practice and provide valuable insights from peers and experts. Here's how you can interact with the community:

1. Ensure that the visibility of your experience is set to public. This allows other users from the platform to interact with your experience, including adding comments, liking, disliking, and reporting illicit or dangerous experiences.
2. Use the visibility of your public experience to initiate conversations with other experts or individuals who share similar circumstances. Encourage discussions, share insights, and seek feedback from the community to enrich your reflective process.

By actively participating in the Teacher Academy community, you can broaden your perspectives, learn from others' experiences, and contribute to a collaborative learning environment.

Reflecting on your experience – Linking case studies and resources

Integrating case studies and resources into your reflection process can provide valuable insights and support your development journey. Here's how you can link case studies and resources to your experience:

1. Navigate to the repository section of the platform to search for case studies or resources relevant to your experience. You can use filters or keywords to narrow down your search and find the most suitable materials.
2. Once you've found a relevant case study or resource, select it and add an explanation of why you find it useful or relevant to your experience. Describe how the material aligns with your teaching context, challenges, or goals, and how it contributes to your reflection process.

3. After adding your explanation, link the case study or resource to your experience. This ensures that other users who view your experience can access the material and understand its significance within the context of your reflection.

Exploring experiences

From the main page, navigate to the "Experiences" section to access a list of all public experiences available on the platform. You can browse through the list to discover experiences relevant to your interests, or teaching context. Once you've found an experience that interests you, engage with it by interacting with the following options:

1. **Comment:** Share your thoughts, insights, or questions about the experience by leaving a comment. Engage in discussions with other users and provide feedback to the experience creator.
2. **Like:** Show appreciation for a valuable or insightful experience by liking it.
3. **Dislike:** If you disagree with the content or find an experience unhelpful, you can express your opinion by disliking it. Your feedback is private and helps improve the platform's content curation.
4. **Report:** If you encounter any illicit or dangerous content within an experience, you can report it to the platform administrators to ensure that the platform remains a safe space for all users.

Browsing case studies

From the main page, navigate to the "Case Studies" section to access a comprehensive list of available case studies. You can browse through the collection to discover case studies relevant to your teaching context, interests, or professional development goals.

Click on a case study to view its details, including the teaching scenario, challenges faced, strategies employed, and outcomes achieved. Dive deep into each case to understand the complexities of real-world teaching experiences and learn from educators' insights.

Image 9

Exploring cases study

Classroom Management

One student avoids completing any of the tasks assigned and instead, they disrupt the other students.

Structure of case study:

@classroommanagement @behaviourstrategies

WHAT?

1. Introduction: Classroom Management

I am student teacher of a 4-year undergraduate teacher education degree program, and I am currently on my final ten-week school placement in a secondary school. I have 1 class in particular where I am experiencing a range of classroom management issues.

2. Problem context:

It is Thursday on Week 4 of school placement. I have a 2nd year practical class (80 minutes). During these longer practical lessons for the duration of School Placement, the class are working on a project. Students are engaged in a demonstration while I give an overview of the tasks to be completed in today's lesson. One student avoids completing any of the tasks assigned and instead, they disrupt the other students. This brings a lot of unwanted disruption to the class. This particular student has done this in previous lessons, even though last week I had spoken to the student individually after class and they said that this would not be an issue in future. I find my attention being drawn to this one student and feel like I am spending a lot of time and energy considering how I respond and manage this situation in the lesson. However, this is then taking my attention away from other students in the lesson and therefore, management of the learning environment. I feel frustrated as I believed I had dealt with this issue last week, yet I find myself here again today. I am left wondering what do I do next?

SO WHAT?

3. How did I find out more?

Before I approached my cooperating teacher, I decided to look further into research on classroom management to see what actions I could take to resolve the issue and what might be causing it. I also went back to lecture and tutorial notes from my college work to see what strategies I could use. Through this process, I found lectures/tutorial notes related to understanding student behaviour; the four goals of disruptive behaviour; the hierarchy of management interventions; Marzano's (2003) effective aspects of classroom management; basic prevention strategies and Diversion/Containment/Diffusion strategies. I also recall engaging with a TED Talk on Restorative Practice which may be worth exploring again https://www.ted.com/talks/michelle_snow_empathy_the_heart_of_difficult_conversations/transcript.

Note. Picture from DigitalTA platform v1 (April 2024).

Discovering useful resources

From the main page, visit the "Resources" section to explore a diverse range of resources available on the platform. From lesson plans and teaching guides to research articles and multimedia materials, you'll find resources to meet your specific needs and interests.

Use filters or search functionality to narrow down your search and find resources relevant to your teaching context, subject area, or professional interests. Filter resources by theme, educational level, format, and more to discover content that aligns with your needs.

Click on a resource to view its details, including a description, and any accompanying materials.

Tutoring or mentoring an experience (tutors/mentors only)

As a mentor or tutor on the Teacher Academy platform, you have the opportunity to provide guidance and support to educators.

1. Explore the list of public experiences to identify those that align with your expertise and interests. Consider factors such as teaching context, challenges faced, and thematic relevance.
2. Send and receive requests. Accept those that you feel confident in supporting based on your knowledge and experience.
3. Engage in meaningful interactions with educators by providing guidance, answering questions, and offering insights relevant to their experiences. Foster a supportive and collaborative learning environment by encouraging dialogue and sharing best practices.

4. Leave personalized notes or feedback on educators' experiences to provide constructive criticism, commend their efforts, and offer suggestions for improvement. Use your expertise to help educators reflect on their teaching and develop strategies for growth.

Developing new case studies (tutors/mentors only)

As a tutor, you have the opportunity to contribute to the collective knowledge by developing new case studies. You can:

1. Generate new case studies from scratch by crafting scenarios, challenges, and teaching experiences from scratch. Consider real-world teaching situations, common challenges faced by educators, and innovative strategies employed to overcome them.
2. Transform existing experiences that are considered complete or comprehensive into case studies. Select experiences that provide valuable insights, lessons learned, and reflective narratives suitable for further analysis and discussion. Adapt the experience content into a structured case study format, incorporating additional context, analysis, and resources as needed.

Experiment with different formats and mediums to present your case studies effectively. Combine textual descriptions, multimedia elements, audiovisual recordings, and interactive components to engage learners and facilitate deeper understanding and reflection.

3.4. Our cases

A case study is a real-world exploration of a particular educational challenge or success. These studies delve deep into specific instances where teaching methods, classroom management strategies, or other educational practices have been used. They are crafted to support the decision-making and theoretical work of educators at all stages of their careers by focusing on real-life examples and offering practical insights and guidance.

3.4.1 Purpose of Case Studies

The primary purpose of a case study is to serve as an educational tool that:

- Demonstrates good practices: each case study highlights effective strategies and methodologies used in education. These are not just theoretical approaches but practical actions taken by educators that led to successful outcomes in dealing with specific classroom challenges.
- Inspires educators: by showcasing real examples of how other teachers have navigated challenges and implemented innovative solutions, case studies inspire both pre-service and in-service teachers. They provide a source of motivation and creative ideas that can be adapted to various educational contexts.
- Offers solutions: case studies provide detailed scenarios and solutions, helping educators understand how they might address similar issues in their own classrooms. This problem-solving approach is directly applicable and can be a valuable resource in teacher training and development.

To ensure quality and reliability, each case study is carefully processed and reviewed by experienced tutors. This review ensures that all case studies meet high academic and practical standards, making them trustworthy sources of information.

Educators can use case studies to learn from examples, seeing firsthand how different strategies work in actual classrooms and understanding the reasoning behind certain educational decisions. These studies bridge the gap between theory and practice by demonstrating how theoretical concepts are applied in real-life scenarios. By reflecting on the outcomes and methods used in case studies, educators can consider how to adapt these techniques to their own teaching environments.

Case studies might serve as useful tools for learning and improvement, providing a foundation for developing practical skills and innovative practices. They are great resources for any educator looking to enhance their teaching effectiveness and positively impact their students' learning experiences.

3.4.2 Case study construction

When constructing and reviewing educational case studies, it is essential for tutors to follow a structured approach that facilitates clear communication and effective learning. This section outlines the recommended structure, which is based on Framework for Reflexive Learning (Rolfe et al. 2001). Each case study should consist of three main components dealing with context, information gathering, and decision focus of the case.

Figure 2

Framework for Reflexive Learning



Note. From the consortium, based on Rolfe et al. 2001.

The Framework for Reflexive Learning model which encompasses the stages of "What?", "So What?", and "Now What?", provides a robust framework for developing educational case studies. In the previous chapter, "Reflecting on Your Experience – Completing the Self-Reflection," you find more information on this structured reflection model that assists teachers, particularly pre-service and newly qualified ones, in critically evaluating their teaching experiences.

This model helps in identifying and analyzing teaching experiences, leading to actionable insights and improvements in educational practice. Below is an overview of each stage, designed to assist tutors through the process of creating meaningful case studies.

Each stage of the case study development should serve as a step in a continuous cycle of reflection and improvement. Tutors should ensure that pre-service teachers engage deeply at each stage, providing a detailed narrative that not only describes the experience but also analyse it and plan for future improvements. This reflective process is crucial for professional development and enhances the overall quality of teaching and learning.

3.4.3 Criteria for case study in the international context

In developing educational case studies, it is essential to recognize the national specifics such as legislation, culture, and social context that shape educational experiences. Each case study naturally embodies these elements, providing a rich, context-specific insight into the educational challenges and strategies pertinent to that environment. However, to maximize the utility and relevance of these case studies across diverse geographical and cultural boundaries, we encourage authors to adhere to the following criteria. These guidelines are designed to help tutors craft case studies with a broader international appeal, ensuring that the lessons and strategies they encompass are accessible and applicable to a global audience. By focusing on these criteria, we aim to foster an inclusive platform where educational insights transcend local specifics and contribute to a collective, international educational discourse.

Table 3:

Criteria for case study development

CRITERIA CATEGORY	CRITERIA
Case Study Selection	Is the case study oriented on classroom-based challenges? Is the case study applicable to general situations? Have the ethical criteria been observed?
Problem Related Criteria	Is the focus of the case study oriented on selected topics? Is the aim of the case study comprehensible? Does the case study provide sufficient context/background? Does the case study provide analysis of the issue? Does the case study provide a clear decision focus?
Organisation of Case Study	Does the case study have a clear structure? Does the case study present information in an unbiased way?
Data/Sources Criteria	Does the case study provide credible sources? Does the case study provide data relevant to an international audience?
Reflection Criteria	Does the case study support professional development? Does the case study provide reflective questions?

Note. Production from the consortium

3.4.4 Case study formats

When developing case studies for educational purposes, the format plays a crucial role in how information is conveyed and received. The choice of format can significantly affect the depth of information provided and the ease with which it is understood. On our platform, we recognize the importance of flexibility in content presentation, allowing case study creators (typically tutors responsible for both content and form) to choose the format that best suits the material's complexity and audience needs.

Case studies can be presented in a variety of formats, each offering different advantages for content consumption and engagement. These range from traditional text documents such as PDFs, which are excellent for detailed, linear narratives, to more dynamic formats like videos and podcasts that can enhance engagement through audio-visual elements. Additionally, creative

formats like comic strips can be employed to visually depict scenarios in an engaging and accessible manner, making complex information easier to grasp.

To accommodate diverse learning preferences and ensure comprehensive understanding, multiple formats may be combined. This approach allows creators to leverage the strengths of each format, such as the depth of written content with the engaging appeal of visual or audio media.

Below, we suggest several options that case study creators might consider.

1. Podcast format: A novice teacher's monologue (narration/explanation):

- Structure: a novice teacher follows the scenario of the case study.
- Technically friendly solution.
- Engagement: a bit difficult to hold attention for the listeners and then work with the information.

2. Podcast format: Semi-structured interview:

- Participants: a novice teacher and a moderator.
- Structure: follows a core structure of case study, but allows for additional sub-questions, details, personal experiences, etc.
- Engagement: more engaging than a monologue due to the interactive format.
- Focus on reflection: encourages deep reflection through targeted questions (e.g., feelings, seeking help, interactions with experienced teachers, personal growth, sharing experiences, needs for support).
- Flexibility: can focus on specific parts of the interview/video, enabling listeners to propose their own ideas, conclusions, etc.

3. Comic Strip Creation

- Content: should have a plot, development, and a story as described in the CS.
- Dynamic element: essential to include elements that bring the story to life.
- Format: a simple comic, ranging from 9 to 12 panels, with short texts in speech bubbles or beneath images.
- Art style: open to professional illustrations or simpler drawings (even child-like sketches).
- Efficiency: the small amount of text involved makes working with the CS manageable.
- Consideration: possible to explore different approaches given the format's flexibility.

4. Interactive Poster Design:

- Composition: dominated by text and graphic elements (colored areas, bold fonts, arrows, exclamation marks, question marks) for an informative approach, or a central photo/image of a beginning teacher surrounded by information boxes.
- Content focus: information boxes can follow the CS or highlight areas crucial to the beginning teacher (e.g., information sources, significant colleagues, peers, family, reflective experiences, undergraduate preparation, professional beliefs).

5. Treasure Hunt Concept:

- Basis: gamification, inspired by children's board games, focusing on a character's journey, including obstacles, successes, rewards...

- Structure: emphasizes clear progression and development, outlined as start → journey → goal.
- Milestones: each box within the game represents significant milestones as described in the CS, with potential use of colours (inspired by traffic lights) for visual appeal and clarity.
- Versatility: designed to be visually attractive and offer clear progression, suitable for a range of follow-up activities (e.g., individual, pairs, small groups).

Concept Map/Mind Map:

- Purpose: serves for visualization, clarification, summarization, and clear arrangement of hierarchical relationships (subordination and superiority).
- Creation: can be created independently following specific instructions (e.g., the structure of the map) or by adding to an existing map with examples and comments.
- Flexibility: offers the possibility to create maps online, enhancing accessibility and convenience.
- Variety: compatible with working with different types of maps, accommodating diverse needs and preferences.

3.5. Themes

To help users navigate and connect with relevant topics and discussions, the content is organised into specific themes.

Our thematic exploration of the needs and challenges faced by newly qualified teachers (NQTs) across Belgium, Ireland, the Czech Republic, Poland, and Spain synthesizes insights from both a comprehensive literature review and detailed focus group discussions. These sources include scoping review (O'Flaherty et al., 2023) which highlighted common issues across these nations, and feedback from the Erasmus project's focus groups, which provided firsthand accounts from NQTs in the Czech Republic, Poland, and Spain. The themes we describe on our platform reflect a blend of these approaches, ensuring a robust and nuanced understanding of the various dimensions impacting pre-service and NQTs today.

Each theme acts as a tag that you can use to find conversations that interest you or to tag your own posts. Here's a brief overview of each theme:

3.5.1 Digital Technology

In the theme of Digital Technology, questions and experiences might focus on various aspects of integrating technology into teaching practices. These could include inquiries into how digital tools can enhance instructional methods, the potential for technology addiction among students, and the challenges educators face in fostering digital literacy. Other questions may explore the adequacy of current technical equipment for implementing digital education, any limitations and restrictions associated with the use of such technologies, and whether teachers possess sufficient theoretical knowledge to effectively utilize these tools. Additionally, discussions might consider the organizational benefits of digital technology for lesson planning and the broader implications of artificial intelligence on the educational process.

Here are some examples of the issues related to Digital Technology theme:

1. How can digital technology help improve my teaching?
2. What are your experiences with teaching using digital technologies?
3. Can digital technologies be addictive?
4. Is it difficult for me to enhance students' digital literacy if I am not an IT expert?
5. How do students react to teaching using digital technologies?
6. Do I have sufficient technical equipment for teaching with digital technologies?
7. Are there any limits and restrictions on the use of digital technologies?
8. Do I have enough theoretical knowledge about the possibilities of using digital technologies in teaching?
9. How can digital technologies help me better organize my teaching preparations?
10. How can artificial intelligence affect the education process?
11. How might students and teachers use artificial intelligence in education?

3.5.2 Classroom management

Involved teacher actions to create a learning environment that encourages positive social interactions, active engagement in learning, and self-motivation. Many issues come to mind regarding classroom management, such as rules and procedures, guiding and reinforcing appropriate behavior, addressing inappropriate behavior, motivating and engaging students in instruction, teacher-student relationships, and a host of related topics.

Examples of included issues might be related to these questions:

1. What strategies do you use to collaboratively create classroom expectations and rules with your students?
2. How do you ensure that classroom expectations and rules are clear, understandable, and relevant to students' needs and experiences?
3. How do you communicate classroom procedures to students and ensure their understanding and compliance?
4. How do you differentiate classroom procedures to meet the diverse learning needs and preferences of your students?
5. How can you reinforce classroom expectations and rules at the beginning of the school year or course?
6. How do you address instances where students may struggle to meet classroom expectations, and what strategies do you use to provide additional support and encouragement?
7. How do you provide opportunities for students to take on leadership roles or responsibilities in supporting classroom management efforts?
8. How do you adapt your teaching style and instructional methods to accommodate diverse learning preferences and ensure all students are actively engaged in classroom management processes?
9. How do you establish and communicate clear consequences for misbehavior while maintaining a supportive and respectful learning environment?
10. How do you reflect on and evaluate the effectiveness of your responses to misbehavior, and what adjustments do you make to improve classroom management practices?

3.5.3 School culture

School culture is founded on a mutual understanding of the school's purpose, goals, and values. These common beliefs shape the actions and interactions among teachers, students, and administrators. School culture is reflected in established norms and practices such as routine classroom activities, communication patterns, and decision-making processes. These conventional methods contribute to a stable and predictable school environment. The deeply embedded nature of school culture often makes it resistant to external changes, like new educational trends or broader societal shifts. This resistance may be due to a preference for preserving traditions or a fear of the unknown.

Examples of included issues might be related to these questions:

1. How can I create a classroom environment where every student feels safe and valued?
2. What are effective ways to foster a nurturing supportive atmosphere in my class?
3. What measures can I take to address ethical dilemmas in the classroom?
4. How can I ensure that students understand the importance of adhering to school guidelines?
5. How can I incorporate school traditions into my classroom to reinforce shared values?
6. What are some effective ways to engage local businesses and community organizations in our school's activities?
7. What should I do if I encounter resistance from students or parents regarding school rules?
8. What do you think are the most important values that a school culture should promote?

3.5.4 Curriculum, Planning and Development

The concept of curriculum encompasses the processes, tools, and environments necessary to achieve specific educational goals. It refers not only to the content of the curriculum, such as what subjects are taught and how they are organized, but also to the broader educational program of an institution, which includes objectives, teaching methods, and means of assessment. Essentially, the curriculum is a comprehensive plan that guides both the instructional content and the broader educational experiences that students encounter. It integrates the sequence of subjects, specific content, teaching methodologies, resources used, and even the preparation of teachers, to ensure a cohesive and holistic educational journey for students.

Examples of questions included may be related to the following:

1. What strategies would you use to effectively plan and implement curriculum-aligned instruction?
2. How would you evaluate the effectiveness of your teaching in the context of the curriculum objectives?
3. What challenges and obstacles would you expect to face in implementing the curriculum in practice? How would you address them?
4. How would you deal with any discrepancies between your pedagogical approaches and the requirements of the curriculum?
5. What do you think are the key elements that should be included in the curriculum preparation of future teachers?

6. What practical experiences would you recommend for student teachers to gain a deeper understanding of the curriculum and its implementation?
7. How could teacher preparation programs better focus on developing the skills needed to work effectively with curriculum in the classroom?
8. What roles do educators play in curriculum formation and innovation?

3.5.5 Communication and Relationship building

Communication is the process of sending and receiving information in order to achieve understanding. Communication is therefore a two-way way of conveying information through some medium (sound, written text, signs, symbols, body movements, etc.). It can take place by verbal or non-verbal methods; face-to-face or through communication devices. Part of the process is also creating a safe and welcoming space for communication.

Good relationships are based on good communication. Relationship building is a set of soft skills that a person uses to create positive relationships, integrate into a group, and build understanding between themselves and others. Openness, honesty, appreciation of others and trust are essential. Valuable skills to develop are active listening and emotional intelligence - the ability to recognise how emotions affect us and those around us.

Examples of included issues might be related to these questions:

1. How to support the building of relationships between pupils?
2. How to support the building of relationships between teachers (between teachers and school management)?
3. How to develop students' emotional intelligence necessary for building good relationships?
4. Where can teachers find sources of information for developing communication and building relationships between students?
5. How has communication and relationship building developed in recent years?
6. How does usual communication differ in different countries/cultures?
7. Is there space for building soft skills in education?
8. What are the consequences of ineffective communication for those involved (teachers, pupils, parents)?
9. How can you adequately respond to manifestations of inappropriate communication in the school environment?

3.5.6 Professional Collaboration and Development

Professional cooperation and development can take place between two or more professionals, in our case teachers. Collaboration is a broad term that covers various types of interpersonal interaction, such as consultation, joint planning, joint teaching and coaching (in a broad sense, the sharing of best practices). Professional collaboration recognizes the expertise of each person involved and is based on positive relationships, respect, reciprocity and effective communication. For professional cooperation and development realized in this way, it is necessary to provide teachers with emotional support and an open environment so that they can balance all the demands of the external environment and themselves. The goals must be perceived as shared and focus on the student as a priority. Thus, professional collaboration and development can benefit students by contributing to high-quality teaching practices, targeted support and consistency in their learning experiences.

Examples of included issues might be related to these questions:

1. What are the challenges teachers may face in implementing professional collaboration and development?
2. What roles do school management and colleagues play in supporting professional collaboration and development?
3. How could teacher preparation programs better focus on developing the skills needed to effectively collaborate and share with colleagues?
4. What roles can student teachers play in professional collaboration and development in schools?
5. What are the different models and approaches to professional collaboration and development?
6. How can professional collaboration and development contribute to an inclusive and supportive school environment?
7. What examples of professional collaboration and development are important to share?
8. How can schools use peer coaching and mentoring to support teachers' professional development?

3.5.7 Diversity and Inclusion

Diversity means respect for the uniqueness of each individual (e.g. with regard to their age, gender, family background, origin, health situation or place in which they live). The following examples of diversity can be given: cultural, linguistic, ethnic or diversity in the given environment (school, work). Diversity helps to discover the diversity of the bearers and its sharing is beneficial to society, for example because it brings a greater variety of opinions, different work styles, the opportunity to speak more languages, learn more cultures, etc. Adapting to new conditions with different customs and traditions can be challenging, it is necessary work to promote positive relations between all participants and strive to establish equal opportunities.

Inclusion is a concept that can be perceived in a broader sense as social inclusion (this is the integration of disadvantaged individuals into society) and in a narrower sense as school inclusion. This is about the inclusion of all pupils, regardless of their individual needs or specifics, in joint education. The benefits of inclusive education primarily include joint education for all pupils, breaking down social barriers, and pupils learn to understand differences and respect them. An inclusive school facilitates access to education by allowing all pupils to attend mainstream schools close to where they live. Inclusion in schools should be supported by everyone - teachers, parents, pupils and the whole society. Inclusive schools have the potential to offer diversity in teaching and to provide space for making friends, mutual respect and understanding. Inclusion is a process, not a permanent state; therefore, an inclusive school is seen as a school in motion.

Diversity and inclusion care about respecting the differences of each individual, their maximum development and the creation of an environment where everyone can participate in all events.

Examples of included issues might be related to these questions:

1. Why is diversity important in school?
2. What challenges do teachers face in connection with the diversity of the class or school collective?
3. What support does a teacher need to master teaching strategies in a diverse school environment?
4. How can you work with different traditions and cultures of pupils in teaching?

5. What factors contribute to an inclusive school environment?
6. How can interaction with parents be supported within an inclusive school?
7. If you know, can you present examples of good practice of schools that can be described as functionally inclusive?
8. Are you in contact with teachers from other schools or institutions in order to gain inspiration and share your experiences? If so, introduce them.
9. What other benefits do both individuals and institutions derive from diversity and inclusion in practice?
10. How did your institution prepare to become inclusive and promote diversity?

4. How to include DigitalTA platform in your academic activities/training syllabus

4.1. Example from the Czech Republic:

Incorporating an online platform into the curriculum as a tool for reflective practice in teaching provides a dynamic and collaborative approach to teacher education.

Platform as a source of inspiration:

At the beginning of their course on the didactic subjects, students would be introduced to the platform and trained on how to use it effectively, including creating their experience, finding sources and make comments to peer experience. The platform might be used as an innovative digital resource designed to enhance the reflective practice of teaching students (pre-service teachers) by enabling them to get to the sources of real experiences and challenges from the teaching profession that can be shared and commented on.

In a specific course focused on technology in education as part of the undergraduate teacher training (in the subject of didactic technology exercises), the possibilities of using the platform (digital technologies) in their own teaching can be discussed with the students. Furthermore, the preparation might be also focused on the process of forming the digital competences of students in individual educational areas.

Tutor/mentor connection

The platform offers the possibility to get connected with mentors (experienced teachers) from faculty schools or schools, that university cooperates with. In the bachelor's degree program for teachers, "Practice in the Educational Process" is included in the third year. It is a continuous practice, which means that the pre-service teacher independently visits a selected school during one semester and completes tasks according to methodical guidelines described in the following methodical guide.

In the subsequent master's degree program, "Continuous Practice" is included in the first and second years. The student is released from university classes and practices in a selected school in a continuous block (three weeks in the first year, four weeks in the second year) at the educational institution under the supervision of a mentor teacher, completing assigned tasks.

Students can be paired with mentors selected based on their expertise and commitment to fostering the next generation of educators. Mentors (as well as tutors) guide students through the reflective process using the Framework of Reflexive Learning model (What? So What? Now

What?), helping them to analyze and learn from their practical experiences. This collaboration aims to deepen the students' understanding of teaching dynamics and improve their professional competencies.

Collaborative Case Study Development:

Students are required to regularly submit reflections on their teaching experiences as part of their coursework. These reflections form the basis of the case studies they can develop on the platform with the supervision of the tutor.

Under the guidance of their tutors, students might use the platform to document specific teaching scenarios they have encountered. This involves describing the context (What?), analyzing the underlying factors and implications (So What?), and planning future actions (Now What?).

Students are encouraged to share their case studies with peers on the platform, fostering a collaborative learning environment. This allows for peer feedback and further refinement of their reflective practice.

Tutors play a crucial role in guiding the reflective process by providing expert feedback on the case studies. They help students to critically assess their teaching strategies and the outcomes of their actions. Tutors assist students in connecting their practical experiences with theoretical knowledge, ensuring that the case studies are grounded in educational theories and literature.

Reflective Discussions:

Regularly scheduled discussions might be held via the platform, where students and tutors collectively analyze and discuss various case studies. This helps to enhance understanding and application of the reflective process in real-world teaching contexts. These discussions are aimed at continuous professional development, encouraging students to iteratively refine their teaching practices based on reflective insights and peer feedback.

4.2. Example from Ireland:

Platform as a source of inspiration:

Development of the Digital TA Platform aimed to facilitate knowledge sharing and collaboration among pre-service teachers (PSTs), newly qualified teachers (NQTs), school-based mentors and higher education-based tutors. It provides a space for PSTs and NQTs to share their experiences from the classroom; engage with mentors across different education levels and from a variety of European contexts; access a database of relevant case studies and engage with an international learning community.

Pre-service teacher/mentor/tutor engagement:

It is envisioned that PSTs/mentors/tutors shall engage with the Digital TA platform across two distinct modules: EN6171 Planning for School Placement and EN6182 School Placement 1.

Module EN6171 Planning for School Placement is scheduled to occur during the Autumn term (September-December 2024). PSTs registered on this module shall be in the first semester of Year

1 of a two-year Professional Master of Education (PME) program. This module requires PSTs to take a detailed look at a variety of planning and teaching skills and concepts that combine to make a teacher effective in the classroom. PSTs are introduced to the complexities of planning and preparation for student-centred learning in preparation for their school placement in semester 2. A particular emphasis is placed on planning, implementing learning strategies, assessment, and evaluation of practice. This module will introduce students to the various elements required to establish and maintain an effective/positive learning environment. PSTs are introduced to models of planning/curriculum models; pedagogical / instructional frameworks; learning outcomes; planning and preparing units of learning and lesson plans. PSTs will have the opportunity to implement these plans in small group settings (Micro-Teaching) and reflect on their own learning from this experience. During this module, working with tutors (university-based teacher educators), PSTs shall be introduced to the Digital TA platform. PSTs shall be introduced to the features of the platform including ‘Experiences’; ‘Case Studies’; the resource data bank; the role of tutors and mentors; the reflective practice process; (What? So What? Now What? Rolfe et al., 2001).

Module EN6182 School Placement 1 is scheduled to occur during Spring term (February -April 2025). PSTs registered on this module shall be in the second semester of Year 1 of a two-year Professional Master of Education (PME) program. This module is facilitated on-line while students complete 10-weeks of a school-based practicum experience. This module provides students with the opportunity to successfully plan for, and reflect on, learning. The concept of students as reflective practitioners is central to this module. Links between the sites of practice (university and school) are embedded in the module and the provision of online tutorials ensures that PSTs are afforded an opportunity to build meaningful links between theory and practice. To reduce the isolation PSTs may experience on placement the tutorials create a community of practice in which PSTs can engage with key learning to teach concepts. They also provide opportunities for co-inquiry and collaborative critical reflection on the successes and challenges of placement experiences. During the course of this online module:

- PSTs shall be facilitated to engage with the platform and reflect on challenges they experience whilst on placement (for example – upload an experience as relevant to their practicum). PSTs shall be facilitated to engage in discursive activities with peers (using comments, likes); and search/engage with resource repository as relevant. PSTs shall be facilitated to connect with a mentor (school-based teacher), and they may engage with the reflective practice process. This involves describing the context of the experience (What?), analysing the underlying factors and implications (So What?), and planning future actions (Now What?).
- Mentors/Tutors shall be introduced to the Digital TA Platform (features of the platform including ‘Experiences’; ‘Case Studies’; the resource data bank; the role of tutors and mentors; the reflective practice process; (What? So What? Now What? Rolfe et al., 2001)) and the various functionalities of the platform.
- Mentors/Tutors will engage with PSTs (connection, comment, chat/discussion) helping PSTs develop an understanding of their experience, bringing their attention to relevant resources, supporting them to analyse and learn from their practical experiences. Mentors may facilitate PSTs engagement with the reflective practice process using the Framework of Reflexive Learning model (What? So What? Now What? Rolfe et al., 2001). Tutors will review a number of ‘experiences’ and completed reflective practice processes with a view to developing additional cases.

4.3. Example from Spain:

Platform as a source of inspiration:

For primary pre-service teachers (Bachelor degree), in Spain, practices at school during the initial teacher training are organized among 4 years, distributed in 660 hours. Pre-service teachers are doing practices in primary or secondary schools ("practice school").

For secondary pre-service teachers (Master degree), practice period is distributed among 2 years (300 hours of practices at school).

In our university we work with two main groups:

1. Primary pre-service teachers and initial students' Teachers trained to be teacher in primary schools (under 4 years of study).
2. Newly graduated students and pre-service secondary teachers; and Master degree students).

Platform use is planned, before, during and after internships at schools. ***All the activities will be related to the academic module called "Teaching Practice in School Context" (42 credits during the Bachelor degree, and 12 credits during the Master degree).*** This curricular module is developed between practices schools and the university: students are staying several periods (to 40 hours to 300 hours during the last year) during their study at the university, experiencing the daily life of the school and classroom.

These stays have a weekly seminar at the university, planned for students to reflect on their practice. In this framework, the platform will be used as a reflective resource. Case studies, resources and international experiences will be a starting point to then connect from the practice school with the school mentor, with the aim of sharing feedback with the student about their practice and reflexivity.

As platform's methodology allows users to navigate freely in the platform, is difficult to foresee how students and mentors will use the new tool, but in order to explore its potential, we will especially focus on the use of these for modules: my experience, the resource repository, Our cases, my tutoring.

Platform will be useful for 3 main reasons:

1. For an inter-institutional collaboration (and a connection between school mentors, university tutors and students in practice) during student practices in practice schools: DigitalTA platform will introduce improvements in the coordination of trainings and will contribute to an integrated teacher training, between the university and practice school, enforcing the relationship between practice' tutor (HEI) and the school mentor (primary or secondary school).
2. To develop formal school-university links: the platform will help to support student and newly qualified teachers to engage in collaborative critical reflection.
3. To connect teachers in transition in a transnational learning community: the European platform for the practical training will help to connect teachers in transition virtually, and exchange ideas, opinions in relation with the shared experiences.

Pre-service teacher engagement:

Platform uses will be linked to the student's level of study. For initial student teachers during the first years, the case studies module will be very relevant, while in training second half, My experience module and My tutoring will be really useful. Every activity on the platform will be link to curricular module called “practices at school”.

For pre-service secondary teachers, platform use will be promoted for sharing experience, looking for resources, working on cases-study.

Table 4

Pre-service teacher engagement in Spain

Group	Student Activity	Module used
1. Primary pre-service teachers	To read international experiences To share an experience with learning community To comment an experience	My experience
	To prepare reflection seminars To reflect on their practice	Study Cases
	Individual tutoring with HEI tutor and practice school mentor around the shared experience	My tutoring
	To look for resources in order to reflect on their own practice	Resource repository
2. Secondary Pre-service teachers	To read international experiences To share an experience with learning community To comment an experience	My experience
	To prepare reflection seminars To reflect on their practice To build cases with school mentor	Study Cases
	Individual tutoring with HEI tutor and practice school mentor around the shared experience	My tutoring
	To look for resources in order to reflect on their own practice	Resource repository

Note. Production from the consortium.

Mentor/tutor engagement:

From a general perspective, tutor from the university and mentor form schools will have a similar activity: they can navigate in the platform, share experiences commenting posts, build cases-study, and offer support to students or newly qualified teachers.

From a curricular perspective, platform will be used for following student progress in practice school (using my tutoring module), ask student to prepare a reflection related to a case-study (study-cases module), offer support to transnational students (using my tutoring module, which allow to present tutor/mentor expertise).

Table 5

Mentor/tutor engagement

Group	Activity	Module used
1. Mentors/tutors	To share an experience with learning community To comment an experience	My experience
	To build cases	Study Cases
	Individual tutoring with student and practice school mentor around the shared experience	My tutoring
	To upload resources in order to support student reflection	Resource repository

Note. Production from the consortium.

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