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A theory-based framework for intermediate phase pre-service language teachers' application of transformative assessment practices

Abstract

Limited studies illustrate the significance of a transformative perspective on pre-service teachers' assessment practices during their study in higher education institutions (HEIs). As such, the need to prepare pre-service teachers for the transformative realities of the workplace has been widely acknowledged as a crucial element of contemporary teacher education. Therefore, this conceptual article aims to provide a transformative theory-based elucidation on assessment practices and their application by intermediate-phase pre-service language teachers (IPPLTs). Having applied transformative learning theory (TLT) and a narrative literature review (NLR), this article proposes a transformative theory-based framework (TTbF) that HEIs can apply to equip IPPLTs with transformative assessment practices (TAPs) during their training and teaching practice sessions. The findings reveal that transformability, transformative-targeted interventions, and adaptive capacity can be valuable takeaways for IPPLTs' professional development in applying TAPs. The study recommends that IPPLTs consider applying the TTbF to strengthen their ability to implement TAPs in schools.

Keywords: Assessment practices, intermediate phase, pre-service language teachers, professional development, transformative-based theory framework

1. Introduction

Research has shown the importance of understanding teachers' perceptions of assessment (Brown, *et al.*, 2019; Lutuvac & Flores, 2021; Monteiro, *et al.*, 2021), and teachers' concerns regarding the use of assessment in their teaching practice (TP) classrooms. The TP lessons that pre-service teachers present reveal valuable information about student learning. Notably, assessment provides information on what students learned, how well they learned, and the challenges they experienced with learning. Khumalo and Maphalala (2018) additionally explain that assessment practices elicit, recognise, describe, and use knowledge to inform TP and facilitate learners' further scholastic development.



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Within South African teacher education, the Minimum Requirement for Teacher Education Qualification (MRTEQ) expects that pre-service teachers (and newly qualified teachers) should be able to demonstrate the following abilities:

- To strategise how to design appropriate learning programmes, and
- to evaluate learners in dependable and diverse ways
- while using assessment results to improve teaching and learning.

Although assessment practices are expected to contribute to improving teaching and purposeful learning, pre-service teachers still experience challenges with their application. Xu and He (2019) explore how pre-service teachers' conceptions of assessment practices are influenced by assessment changes over their study period and their implications for teacher assessment literacy. Their findings reveal that pre-service teachers are not adequately skilled in applying assessment practices, nor are they (pre-service teachers) always capable of confronting the complexities of assessment practices. Xu and He (2019) are adamant that the basic principles of assessment taught in HEIs are insufficient to help pre-service teachers think differently about assessment practices. Another study by Öztürk and Aydin (2019) reveals that in Turkey teachers also struggle with assessment practices because of limited exposure to the concepts and practices of educational assessment during their years of study. The implication is that Turkish teachers experience a lack of assessment literacy, which contributes to the need to develop an improved understanding of assessment terminology (Öztürk & Aydin, 2019).

Another problem is that Turkish teachers are not fully aware of the extent of assessment methods (OECD, 2019) because of an inadequate understanding of what assessment might mean. A study conducted in South Africa reveals that South African education programmes do not adhere to the need to prepare pre-service teachers to use assessments to monitor learner progress or effective learner engagement during learning (Barends, *et al.*, 2023). The authors further reveal that the teacher education policy pays little to no attention to how pre-service teachers can ensure that assessment should benefit prolonged or long-term learning.

Considering prevailing challenges experienced by pre-service teachers to implement effective assessment practices, Xu and He (2019) recommend that more research be conducted to showcase a transformative view of how various aspects may influence pre-service teachers' ability to apply assessment practices. Barends *et al.* (2023) argue for more robust pedagogical approaches to assessment, echoing the call for a transformative view regarding pre-service teachers' capacity to apply assessment practices. While the article builds upon existing studies on pre-service teachers' assessment practices, it simultaneously heeds to the call of scholars like Xu and He (2019) and Barends *et al.* (2023), by proposing a TTbF that both integrates theory and encourages transformative assessment practices. Against the call for a transformative view on assessment, this article further aims to propose a theory-based framework for IPPSLTs applying TAPs, especially during training and TP sessions. As such, the following question is asked: *How can a transformative theory-based framework guide pre-service language teachers regarding the application of assessment practices in schools?*

2. Transformative learning theoretical framing

This article employed transformative learning theory (TLT), which requires education where new information is considered a resource in the adult learning process (Mezirow, 1997). This article explores how pre-service teachers' assessment practices can be transformed

by applying a transformative theory-based framework. Pre-service teachers tend to practice the same assessment methods that they grew up with in schools. Their existing frames of reference therefore need to be adjusted for them to show new insights regarding assessment practices. A transformative view on IPPSLTs' assessment practices aligns with the notion that "to become meaningful, learning requires [more than] that the learner incorporate new information into an already well-developed symbolic frame of reference, [but requires] an active process involving thought, feelings, and disposition" (Mezirow, 1997: 10) into existing cognitive frameworks. Thus, TLT was helpful in adult learners, specifically in that IPPSLTs may be assisted in transforming their frames of reference in terms of the application of assessment practices during their TP sessions in HEIs.

The significance of TLT in this article aligns with what Mezirow (1997) posits, namely that TLT is not an add-on but can be regarded as the essence of adult education. Thus, applying a TTbF can be regarded as an educational intervention that can assist IPPSLTs in acquiring new dispositions, understandings, and skills essential for transformative learning.

In education and assessment, a TLT framework might contain challenging traditional assessment methods and promote alternative approaches that give precedence to equity, social justice, and student-centred learning. This article will now delve into how these and other transformative approaches can be applied specifically within pre-service teacher education, aiming to prepare future educators to enact more equitable, student-centred assessment practices in their classrooms.

3. Preparing pre-service teachers for teaching and assessment

Samusevica and Striguna (2017) assert that the preparation of any pre-service teacher should focus on the attainment of relevant information, skills, attitudes, principles, abilities, and experience regarding how to teach and how to apply assessment practices as part of teaching and learning. As such, pre-service teachers should be able to incorporate philosophies, teaching methods, and assessment practices during their years of study and when they are schoolteachers.

In a study in Korea, Yin (2019) reports that English language pre-service teachers grappled with teaching methods and assessment practices owing to a lack of training on how to understand policy relevant to teaching and assessment. A significant concern is that pre-service teachers must be trained to recognise what is desirable in the language contexts rather than merely learning assessment terms by heart. Although understanding assessment skills is highly recommended, Yin's (2019) study participants proposed additional training in re-explaining language theories and applied techniques that they can use immediately when employed at schools after their studies. On the African continent, the preparation of pre-service teachers in Tanzania focuses on centred instruction and developmental and reliable assessment methods. Although their training emphasises developing capabilities and applying knowledge in real life (Tarmo, 2014), Tanzanian pre-service teachers seldom consider innovative teaching and assessment practices when teaching. These pre-service teachers lack an understanding of the combination of theory and practice integration such as in teaching and assessment when appointed as teachers after their years of study (Tarmo, 2014).

A South African study found that, although the preparation of pre-service teachers should focus on high-stakes assessment, teachers instinctively follow information regarding school-based assessment and little detail goes into the generating of deep learning experiences

(Reyneke, 2016). From a theory perspective, Reyneke's (2016) finding holds negative consequences for applying assessment practices from the view of critical pedagogy. Nkealah and Simango (2023) explain that critical pedagogy permits pre-service teachers to carry out transformative teaching when they obtain their degrees and are schoolteachers. However, pre-service teachers should be assisted in finding opportunities to think about practice learned during their years of study because the school system is diverse and has limitations on applying assessment practices effectively.

Three insights can be derived from this section. Firstly, the preparation of pre-service teachers for teaching and assessment should be geared toward developing competency and high-stakes assessment skills through the integration and critical self-reflection of their own practice. Secondly, there is a lack of effective policy implementation regarding assessment practices. Thirdly, pre-service teachers cannot apply their acquired knowledge to real-life (i.e., authentic assessment) and diverse school situations; thus, a need to be more inclusive and culturally relevant.

4. Applying assessment practices during teaching practice

It is anticipated that pre-service teachers should learn and know how to apply assessment during TP. They must develop assessment information, mirror their understanding of assessments, and enact their assessment practices while bridging the gaps between theory and assessment practice (Hill, *et al.*, 2017). Thus, learning to assess is one of the most significant and exciting tasks for pre-service teachers. In this regard, Xu and Brown (2016: 159) state that "*assessment-literate teachers* are those who constantly critically self-reflect on their assessment practice, participate in professional activities concerning assessment in communities, engage in professional conversations about assessment, self-interrogate their conceptions of assessment, and seek resources to gain a renewed understanding of assessment and their roles as assessors".

Interpreting this view (Xu & Brown, 2016), it is believed that pre-service teachers should be able to show an evolving awareness of what language assessment is and what language constructs mean. However, to ensure that pre-service teachers have a stronger sense of applying assessment practices, they should be equipped with innovative ideas on how to act swiftly and with foresight regarding teaching, particularly assessment (Netolicky, 2020). Innovation in assessment approaches should be regarded as an attempt to enhance pre-teachers' experience and produce new and creative pedagogical teaching approaches (Lawrence, 2021). Such creative ways of teaching are associated with innovation regarding assessment (Weideman, 2019). For example, students' judgement and self-regulation can be developed through applying feedback and feedforward practices (Baroudi, *et al.*, 2023) for evaluation purposes and an instrument for professional development. These feedback and feedforward practices can also lead to a mind shift towards assessment for learning, where enduring formative assessment language practices enhance the learning process and support outcomes measurement.

However, the challenge is that many teachers - and pre-service teachers - have little knowledge of how to transform their assessment practices (DeLuca *et al.*, 2019). Challenges with assessment responsibilities and the purpose of assessment are issues that underpin pre-service teachers' struggles with applying assessment practices (Mellati & Khademi, 2018). While Hill, *et al.* (2017) found undesirable attitudes and emotions toward assessment, Deneen and Brown (2016) revealed differentiated sentimental conceptions of assessment

among pre-service teachers. Hill *et al.* (2017) also describe how pre-service teachers tend to apply the same assessment techniques they experienced while still at school. Similarly, Hamodi, López-Pastor and López-Pastor (2016) report that pre-service teachers usually regard assessment as identical to the assessment culture they experienced and frequently reject innovative assessment practices.

5. A theoretical view on assessment practices

While James (2006) contends that there is a lack of an adequate theoretical base for assessment practices, Brown (2022) emphasises that “this is still a long step from where classroom assessment happens” (p. 1). To understand what is meant by an adequate theoretical base (James, 2006), Pillay and Pillay (2019) deliberated on the diverse learning theories that are commonly used to explain how learning takes place. They asserted that assessment practices should be considered a robust, yet refined understanding of its history, the role it plays in specific circumstances, and its future expectations. Table 1 summarises the theoretical foundations for learning and assessment practices to indicate how different learning theories inform the relationship between the various roles of learners, teaching methods and assessment strategies. Table 1 also highlights the challenge for IPPSLTs to be knowledgeable about the different learning theories and simultaneously apply this theoretical knowledge during TP sessions.

Table 1: Summary of alignment between assessment theories and English language education

Source: Pillay and Pillay (2019)

	Behaviourism	Cognitivism	Constructivism
Learners' role	Learners are passive participants in the learning process, Facilitates knowing <i>what</i> .	Learners take active part in the learning process, Facilitates knowing <i>how</i> .	Learning takes place through interaction with others, Emphasises reflection in action.
Implications for learning		Concept maps, Reflective thinking.	Authentic case-based learning, Reflective practice, Cooperative knowledge construction.
Teaching method	Lecture modelling, Demonstration, Programmed instruction.	Problem-solving, Concept mapping, Advanced organiser.	Diaries, Role modelling, Problem-based learning, Collaborative learning.
Assessment strategies	Criterion-referenced assessment, Multiple-choice questions, Recall items.	Essays, Written reports, Projects.	Peer grading, Peer reviews.

Three inferences can be derived from this summary in Table 1. Firstly, assessment should not be a summative judgment of learners' abilities. Secondly, assessment for learning should be an approach to involve learners in meaningful learning. Thirdly, innovative and valuable assessment practices are necessary to inform instruction in a classroom. As such, IPPSLTs must know how learning takes place, how to establish whether learning took place, and how

to facilitate learning. Arguably, learning is a process of interaction between what is known and what is to be learned. Therefore, IPPSLTs should be trained and allowed to practise aligning learners' roles, implications on learning, teaching methods, and assessment strategies, thereby making provision for assessment for learning and assessment of learning. Therefore, we believe innovative, transformative knowledge about assessment practices is crucial for training IPPSLTs to build their assessment literacy and think differently about their perceptions of assessment.

Furthermore, it is essential to provide additional information on some studies that used philosophical theories in their research on pre-service teachers and their ability to apply assessment practices in schools.

Ogan-Bekiroglu and Suzuk (2014) studied pre-service teachers' assessment literacy and its implementation in practice. The authors applied the second dimension of Tittle's (1994) work, observing pre-service teachers' actions and assessment knowledge from a constructivist epistemological viewpoint. One of the findings indicates that it is difficult for pre-service teachers to convert assessment knowledge into assessment practices.

Furthermore, Khumalo and Maphalala (2018) examined pre-service teachers' experiences implementing formative assessment during TP. The authors applied socio-constructivist theory, which holds that learners are regarded as active participants in their learning. Because of this theory, assessment is critical because learners may experience cognitive and emotional images of reality during social interaction and cooperative learning to comprehend where assessment reflects in this process.

Oo, Alonzo and Davison (2021) focused on pre-service teachers' decision-making and classroom assessment practices. This study uses teacher agency as a philosophical theory to help clarify how pre-service teachers develop their decision-making skills by applying assessment approaches to support learning. Concerning the theory, an important finding is that guidelines should be available to support pre-service teachers concerning their assessment practices and classroom assessment decision-making during the practicum.

Moura *et al.* (2023) conducted a study on providing physical education pre-service teachers with opportunities to interrogate their conceptions and practices of assessment. From the lens of occupational socialisation theory (OST), this study (Moura *et al.*, 2023) endorsed and reinforced a framework to advance pre-service teachers' assessment literacy. Occupational socialisation theory contributes to understanding why pre-service teachers struggle to regard assessment as anything other than what they experienced as learners and how best to engage critically with assessment data to promote learners' learning. In line with OST, the findings reveal that the crucial use of appealing, applied, helpful, and co-constructed scaffolding methods is reiterated.

From a philosophical theoretical perspective, it is evident that pre-service teachers find it challenging to apply their assessment literacy to assessment practices; learners are regarded as dynamic partners of their learning; guidelines should be available to support pre-service teachers concerning their assessment practices, and pre-service teachers should be aware of how best to interpret critically and engage with assessment information to promote learners' learning.

6. Transformative assessment practices under the microscope

Although no definitive explanation for TAPs could be found in the literature, there were studies with strong views on the phenomenon. Queen's University (2023) indicates that when teachers use opportunities to transform assessment practices, they should build on existing assessment knowledge and skills, reflect on foundational assessment principles, explore contemporary assessment strategies, and create new assessments – to support learners' learning across disciplines and contexts. On the African continent, Abate, *et al.*, (2023) developed a lesson study for transformative assessment among seven schools in Ethiopia to increase teachers' knowledge of implementing transformative assessment. They refer to transformative assessment as “a kind of assessment undertaken in a teaching-learning process that changes the way teachers teach and students learn a lesson” (Wedajo & Hunde, 2023: 269). Of the fundamental constructs for transformative assessment that Wedajo and Hunde (2023) mention, of significance is the quality of assessments that should include problem-solving skills, critical thinking, and reflective practices of learners. Abate *et al.* (2023) also highlighted the use of assessment data as a transformative tool to facilitate learning and teaching on the one hand in addition to improving professional growth on the other.

Benson and Dresdow (2014) linked transformative assessment to design thinking in their Business and Management studies. These authors identified elements of transformative assessment such as appropriateness, meaningfulness, and the potential for possible change it can bring about in both learning and teaching. Importantly, they reference transformative assessment as a process not for others but for those who create and use it. This aspect of transformative assessment is significant for the professional development of IPPSLTs, as it compels IPPSLTs to think carefully about the assessment tasks they develop for learners and their essential role in generating assessment information.

Drawing on the views of Abate *et al.* (2023) and Benson and Dresdow (2014), TA should change the way learners learn and teachers teach, promote reflective practices of both teachers and learners, and support professional growth and ownership.

7. Employing a qualitative methodology

This study applied a qualitative research methodology that “crosses disciplinary and subject boundaries and focuses on the reasons underlying diverse aspects of behaviour” (Gundumogula, 2020: 302). Significantly, qualitative research is mainly investigative (Mohajan, 2018), seeks to understand and explore a phenomenon, and is contextualised, interpretive, and non-numerical (Nassaji, 2020). Thus, having employed a qualitative research approach enabled a deeper understanding of how a transformative theory-based framework guides pre-service language teachers regarding the application of assessment practices in schools.

8. Conceptual research design

A conceptual research design (CRD) was employed, generally understood as research related to concepts and ideas about a phenomenon under study to solve real-world problems (Hirschheim, 2008). Significantly, CRD is a valuable technique to investigate and analyse existing data on a given point (Martinez, 2022). In this article, a CRD guides concepts or thoughts relevant to applying transformative assessment practices by IPPSLTs during their years of study. The aim therefore was not to include viable experimentation or the perceptions of human beings; instead, the intention was to explore how a transformative theory-based

framework can guide pre-service language teachers regarding the application of assessment practices in schools. Furthermore, conceptual research was helpful in “bridging existing theories in interesting ways, link work across disciplines, providing multi-level insights, and broadening the scope of our thinking” (Gilson & Goldberg 2015: 128). In so doing, we believe that knowledge about assessment practices cannot be viewed the same as before (Foucault, 1973). Foucault’s (1973) view signifies that a CRD can assist in rejecting grand narratives about assessment practices while identifying potential TAPs that could provide innovative knowledge about how IPPSLTs think about and apply assessment in school settings.

9. Conceptual conclusions



Goldkuhl (2019) describes data generation as searching for, noting, selecting, extracting, and capturing data. Data generation in qualitative research is not an automatic mapping process, but rather a process of data generation based on some pre-understanding. Researchers try to make sense of what happens “out there” and select and record what they interpret as relevant to their study (Goldkuhl, 2019). In this article, data generation was done by selecting information already available in the academic domain and information extracted from the literature review in this article. In this article, we selected and extracted data about pre-service teachers’ assessment practices and from philosophical and theoretical perspectives, after which the data was analysed and used to develop a TTbF that can assist IPPSLTs in applying TAPs both during their years of study and beyond.

10. Narrative literature review as a method of analysis

Lincoln and Lynham (2011: 3) began their study with an interesting observation that “quality theory is imperative to sound, informed practice and the continued development and maturity of the field”. In this article, theory can be informative about how IPPSLTs can transform their assessment practices to make learning more meaningful and present fresh, professional challenges to teachers. Notably, a narrative literature review is a valuable theory-building technique (Stratton, 2019) because it allows for analysing information already in the public sphere, although the procedures to select available data are not described (Ferrari, 2015). Ferrari (2015) furthermore states that narrative literature review is the cornerstone for synthesis between the relevant components. It cannot be compared to a systematic review because it allows for flexibility in extracting and collecting already available information.

This study entailed first revisiting the literature review and the outline of theories in this article to extract information in a manner that is not openly methodical because the minimum prerequisite is that there should be an emphasis on prevailing literature (Bastian, *et al.*, 2010). A reinterpretation of constructs from the literature was then provided, as well as theories to build new theories relevant to transformative assessment practices for IPPSLTs. From the extracted information from the literature review and theories, we identified three aspects of transformative assessment practices that we elaborated on: *adaptive capacity*, *transformative-targeted interventions*, and *transformability*. These aspects reference the earlier argument that IPPSLTs should be able to incorporate theories, teaching methods, and assessment practices both during their years of study and when they are schoolteachers. From the information extracted from the literature and the theories, we came up with a table called a transformative theory-based framework (Table 2). The first part of the framework captures excerpts from the literature that link to the expectations for pre-service teachers, for example, reflective activities, awareness of assessment strategies and opportunities to reflect.

Table 2: A transformative theory-based framework

<p>Xu and Brown (2016)</p> <p>“assessment-literate teachers are those who constantly reflect on their assessment practice, participate in professional activities concerning assessment in communities, engage in professional conversation”.</p>	<p>Xu and Brown (2016)</p> <p>“pre-service teachers should be able to show an evolving awareness of what language constructs mean”</p> <p>and</p> <p>Wddajo and Hinde (2023) “the quality of assessments should include problem-solving skills, critical thinking, and reflective practices of learners”.</p>	<p>Nkealah and Simango (2023)</p> <p>“pre-service teachers may need help finding opportunities to think about practice what they have learned”.</p>
		
<p>Pillay and Pillay (2019)</p> <p>“students are passive participants in the learning process”</p> <p>and</p> <p>Ogan-Bekiroglu and Suzuk (2014)</p> <p>“pre-service teachers find it challenging to put their assessment literacy into assessment practices”.</p>	<p>Pillay and Pillay (2019)</p> <p>“learning takes place through interaction with others”</p> <p>and</p> <p>Moura et al. (2023)</p> <p>“the crucial use of engaging, and co-constructed scaffolding approaches is reiterated”.</p>	<p>Pillay and Pillay (2019)</p> <p>“students are active participants in the learning process”.</p> <p>and</p> <p>Khumalo and Maphalala (2018)</p> <p>“learners are regarded as active participants in their own learning”.</p>
		
<p>Transformative-targeted interventions</p>	<p>Transformability</p>	<p>Adaptive capacity</p>

As predicted by learning theories, and its relevance to transformative assessment practices, learners’ behaviour was extracted from the literature and captured to eventually identify three main aspects of transformative assessment practices: Transformative targeted interventions; Transformability and Adaptive capacity.

The last part of the table is the main contribution to the framework. This relates to linking literature and theory and highlighting these aspects about the principles of transformative learning theory, namely a disorienting dilemma that can lead to a change in perspectives, elements of emancipation and liberation that became clear and lastly, the willingness of individuals to change, adapt, experience differences and ultimately transform.

11. Transformative-targeted intervention

Terms such as “reflect” (Xu & Brown, 2016), “passive” (Pillay & Pillay, 2019), and “find it challenging” (Ogan-Bekiroglu & Suzuk, 2014) create the impression that when IPPSLTs look back on how they enact their assessment practices, it may be challenging to them to

understand how to apply innovative assessment strategies. Being unsure of how to apply innovative assessment strategies implies that IPPSLTs may find themselves in an assessment practice crisis where they no longer know how to participate in professional activities concerning assessment but become aware that they need a significant transformation in how assessment is conducted. Our arguments align with the notion of a “disorienting dilemma” as a phase of transformative learning theory. A disorienting dilemma is explained as a crisis that can also trigger a change in perspective (Mezirow, 1997). As such, this article refers to a change in perspective as a transformative-targeted intervention, which we articulate to motivate IPPSLTs to acknowledge their assessment practice challenges while finding empowering solutions to address struggles with assessment. The TLT substantiates the theorisation in this article regarding “engage in professional conversations” (Xu & Brown, 2016), and “pre-service teachers should develop their decision-making skills in terms of using assessment strategies” (Oo *et al.*, 2021). Thus, when IPPSLTs open themselves to “engage” and “develop”, it is possible that, from a transformative learning perspective, meaningful learning becomes a reality in alignment with an already well-developed symbolic frame of reference regarding assessment practices (*vide*: Mezirow, 1997).

12. Transformability

Phrases such as “be able to show an evolving awareness” (Xu & Brown, 2016), “through interaction” (Pillay & Pillay, 2019), and “engaging and co-constructed scaffolding” (Moura *et al.*, 2023) require IPPSLTs to transform the way they think about and apply assessment practices. Through interaction and engagement, IPPSLTs may experience emancipation and liberation in how they think about and apply assessment practices. These elements of emancipation and liberation align with TLT in that IPPSLTs may find a voice to engage in innovative assessment practices, with the ability to construct meanings about assessment (Freire, 1970). Transformability may thus be regarded as the advancement of interactive and engaged awareness of applying a deeper understanding of what assessment entails and how it should be applied in a transformative manner. This theorisation of transformability aligns with the TLT in that IPPSLTs can obtain new knowledge about assessment practices. From a transformative learning perspective, deliberate interaction and engagement draw attention to the notion that IPPSLTs should cultivate assessment habits because a transformative attitude can be regarded as

the process by which we transform our taken-for-granted frames of reverence to make them more inclusive, discriminating, open, emotionally capable of change, and reflective so that they may generate beliefs and opinions that will prove truer or justified to guide action. (Mezirow, 1991: 7–8).

Such a transformative attitude may assist IPPSLTs to investigate what is happening during assessment constantly, analyse prior experiences regarding assessment, and search continuously for innovative methods to influence a transformative stance toward assessment.

13. Adaptive capacity

Terms such as “opportunities to think” (Nkealah & Simango, 2023) and “active participants” (Khumalo & Maphalala, 2018; Pillay & Pillay, 2019) hinge on the thought that IPPSLTs can take advantage of opportunities afforded to them to adapt to innovative assessment practices. The IPPSLTs’ willingness to adapt to innovative practices implies that IPPSLTs can be responsive in personal development and, thus, willing to change how they apply assessment practices. In the words of Foucault (1990),

In what does it consist, if not in the endeavour to know how and to what extent it might be possible to think differently instead of legitimating what is already known? ... It is entitled to explore what might be changed, in its own thought, through the practice of a knowledge that is foreign to it (pp. 8–9).

Given Foucault's (1990) view, if individuals are willing to change their practices, it is possible to adapt, experience differences, and transform. As such, possibilities exist that IPPSLTs can be motivated to foster a desire to transform their way of doing things so that justice can be done to the implementation of assessment practices. Considering these views (Foucault, 1990; Khumalo & Maphalala, 2018; Nkealah & Simango, 2023; Pillay & Pillay, 2019), adaptive capacity can be theorised as the cultivation of a transformative self who can deliberately and self-consciously embark on a constant search for innovative assessment practices to ensure that purposeful learning is achieved. Having adaptive capacity may enable IPPSLTs to implement new assessment skills frequently and create a trusted environment for purposeful learning and adaptive teaching.

This TTbF should not be considered a grand narrative about IPPSLTs' assessment practices. Instead, it should be considered an expansion of views regarding assessment from a transformative stance, hoping that IPPSLTs will be motivated to reflect on and apply innovative assessment practices constantly.

14. Implications for assessment decision-making

An application of the TTbF has implications for assessment decision-making. Firstly, IPPSLTs need mentoring and buddying, implying that pre-service teachers should guide inexperienced fellow students. Teacher guidance through mentoring and buddying may contribute to flexible relationships, allowing for informal discussions and practices about assessment practices. Secondly, HEIs should make provision for institutional support by implementing these implications as well as a structured framework to guide both mentoring and the development of soft skills, such as building confidence, through modified instructive designs. Thirdly, HEIs should be aware that methodologies of assessment are constantly changing. Therefore, IPPSLTs should be assisted to change their frames of reference regarding assessment continuously.

15. Conclusion

In this article, the focus was on the debate regarding assessment practices with a specific focus on IPPSLTs, namely: *How can a theory-based framework guide pre-service language teachers regarding the application of assessment practices in schools?* The conceptualised literature showed that, although it is expected of IPPSLTs to incorporate theories, teaching methods, and assessment practices, pre-service language teachers struggle with integrating theory and practice. Also, during the training of IPPSLTs, there are limited opportunities to practise assessment skills in authentic school situations. In some cases, IPPSLTs have negative feelings and attitudes towards assessment, thus requiring that they be equipped with innovative ideas to avoid the tendency to employ the same assessment strategies they experienced while they were learners at school. The literature review confirmed that transformative assessment has the potential to facilitate professional growth and ownership within IPPSLTs. An application of TA holds the possibility that well-needed problem-solving skills, critical thinking, and reflective practices can be facilitated.

A narrative literature review was valuable as a theory-building technique because it allowed for analysing information already in the public domain. Information about pre-service teachers' assessment practices, as well as from philosophical and theoretical views, was extracted, after which the content was analysed and used to develop a TTbF. The TTbF is steered by the following constructs: adaptive capacity, transformative targeted interventions, and transformability. Adaptive capacity may support IPPSLTs to search constantly for innovative assessment practices to achieve purposeful learning. Transformative targeted interventions refer to a change in IPPSLTs' perspective of assessment when they become aware that they need transformation in how assessment is conducted. Transformability as an intrinsic force may assist IPPSLTs in becoming aware of and willing to adopt a deeper understanding of what assessment entails and how it should be applied in a transformative manner. The TTbF should be regarded as a valuable contribution to knowledge about applying transformative assessment practices by IPPSLTs during practicum. Not only does the TTbF offer a difference in thought about TAPs, but it can also help IPPSLTs escape intellectual normalisation.

This article has opened the door for transformative thinking regarding the assessment practices of IPPSLTs during their years of study. However, this debate can be expanded in future to obtain more knowledge about TAPs in HEIs. As such, it is believed that a vital avenue for future research would be to elicit the voices of pre-service teachers regarding their experiences with TAPS during their years of study, especially to conduct a comparative study between South African pre-service teachers and their global counterparts.

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