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A PEDAGOGICAL MODEL FOR DEVELOPING PROSPECTIVE TEACHERS' PROFESSIONAL CULTURE

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Abstract. This article develops a structural–functional model for fostering prospective teachers' professional culture through pedagogical coursework. Conceptual analysis and theoretical synthesis connect professional values, pedagogical knowledge, responsible action, ethical communication and reflective self-development. The proposed model comprises target, content, process–technological and diagnostic–outcome blocks, supported by three cross-cutting pedagogical conditions. Its operational mechanism links understanding, justification, decision-making, implementation and analysis. Five assessment criteria and fifteen observable indicators connect performance evidence to individual support and instructional adaptation. An illustrative assessment dilemma demonstrates how the model can guide teaching and feedback. The model is presented as a theoretically grounded design requiring empirical validation, rather than as a proven intervention.

Keywords: professional culture, pedagogical model, prospective teachers, professional values, authentic assessment, reflection, feedback.

Knowing pedagogical terminology does not, by itself, demonstrate a prospective teacher's readiness to act responsibly. A student may explain fairness yet struggle to apply it when assessing unequal contributions to group work. Similarly, a well-designed lesson plan does not establish whether its author listens to learners, acknowledges an error or responds ethically to disagreement. These examples motivate the article's working definition of professional culture as the situated coherence of values, knowledge, pedagogical action, ethical communication and reflection. Korthagen's holistic approach connects teacher development with beliefs, professional identity and personal purposes, rather than reducing preparation to isolated competencies [1]. Biggs links intended learning outcomes with learning activities and assessment [2]. Read together, these perspectives suggest a design problem: identifying the components of professional culture is not the same as organising their development through observable professional activity. For analytical purposes, professional competence refers here to the capacity to perform a task, while professional culture highlights the values, relationships and responsibilities through which that capacity is exercised. This working distinction does not imply that competence frameworks exclude ethics. It identifies the specific focus of the proposed model: alignment between what a student professes, decides, does and subsequently revises. Holistic teacher education offers a basis for relating personal meaning to professional activity [1]. Self-determination

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theory identifies autonomy, competence and relatedness as basic psychological needs relevant to motivation [3]. Constructive alignment requires teaching activities and assessment to address the performances expressed in learning outcomes [2]. Accordingly, an outcome concerning ethical communication calls for evidence from interaction, not solely a test of ethical terminology. Darling-Hammond, Hyler and Gardner identify active learning, collaboration, models of practice, expert support, feedback and reflection among features of effective professional development [4]. Their synthesis concerns practising teachers; transferring these features to initial teacher education requires contextual adaptation and separate evaluation. Hattie and Timperley show that feedback effects depend on its focus and delivery [5]. Gulikers, Bastiaens and Kirschner situate authentic assessment in relation to professional practice [6]. Carless and Boud emphasise learners' capacity to understand feedback, make judgements, manage affect and take action [7]. This is a theoretical–conceptual study. Seven publications were selected purposefully for their relevance to holistic teacher development, activity design, motivation, authentic assessment and feedback. Conceptual analysis clarified the boundaries of professional culture and competence; comparative analysis examined the mechanisms proposed in the selected literature; structural–functional modelling linked goals, content, activity, evidence and instructional decisions. The selection is not an exhaustive systematic review. No participants were recruited, no new empirical data were collected and no intervention effects were estimated. The model was constructed through three design checks.

The conceptual synthesis yields four interconnected blocks (Figure 1). The target block specifies coherence between professional values, knowledge and responsible action. The content block connects five components to professional situations. The process technological block translates this content into student activity. The diagnostic outcome block interprets evidence and informs both individual support and the redesign of learning tasks. Six methodological orientations guide all four blocks: systems, axiological, cultural, activity-based, competency-based and reflective approaches. They are design perspectives, not additional blocks or successive stages. The five components likewise do not require five separate lessons. Within one professional situation, a student can choose a value, use knowledge, act, communicate and reflect. The unit of analysis is therefore a professional decision and its enactment, rather than a detached personal trait.

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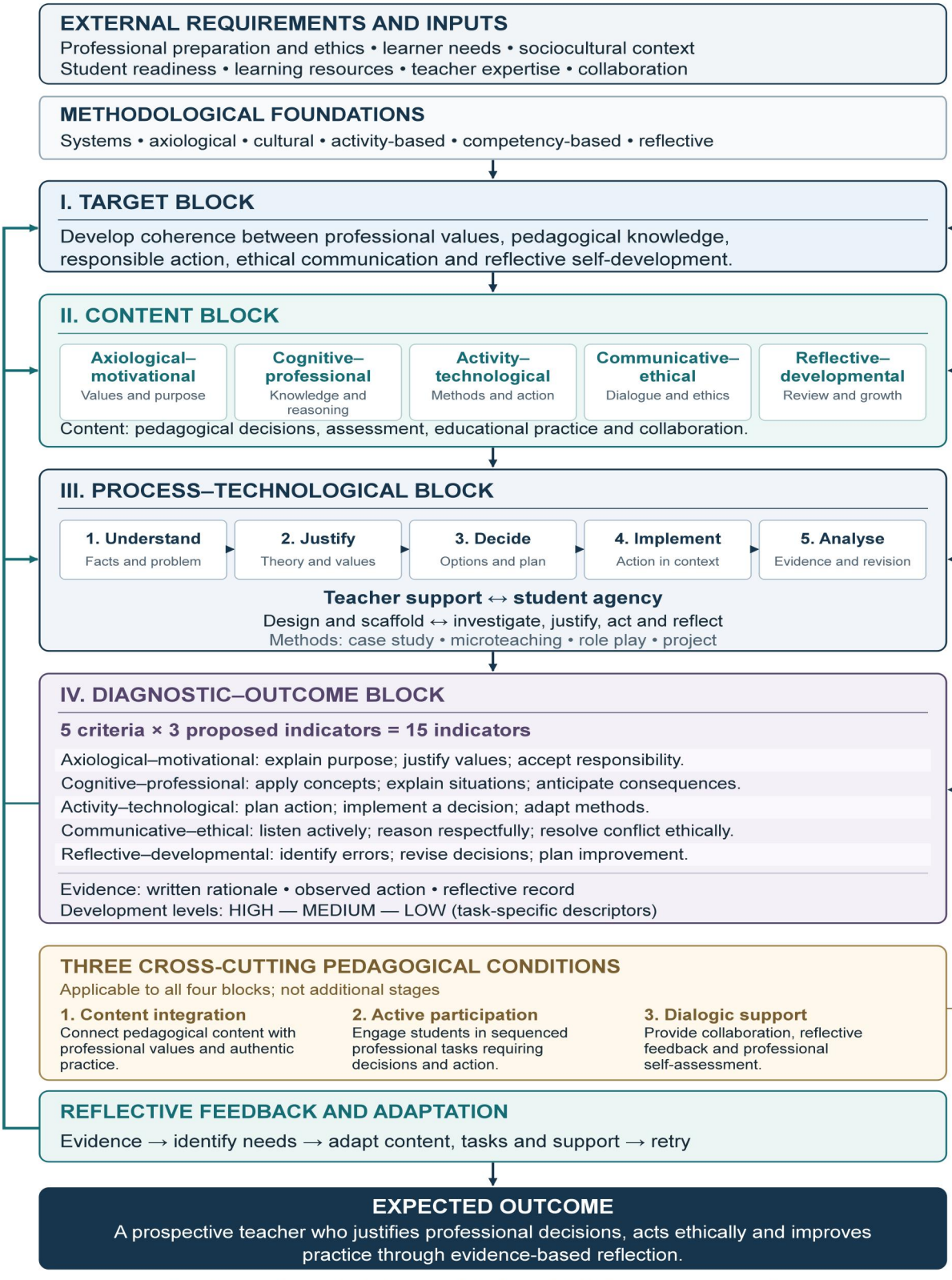


Figure 1. A structural–functional model for developing prospective teachers' professional culture.

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The operational cycle is Understand → Justify → Decide → Implement → Analyse. Understanding separates available facts from assumptions. Justification connects the problem to pedagogical concepts and ethical principles. Decision-making compares alternatives and their consequences. Implementation tests the chosen response through a role-play, microteaching episode or professional task. Analysis examines the reasons for the decision, observed action and required revision. Missing information may trigger a return to an earlier operation; the cycle is not rigidly linear. Three conditions operate across the whole model: integration of pedagogical content with professional values and practice; participation in sequenced, situation-based professional activity; and a dialogic environment supporting reflective feedback and self-assessment. The teacher designs situations, explains criteria and gradually reduces support. The student takes responsibility for an initial decision, its enactment and an improved version.

An illustrative task is “Fair assessment of group work”: some pupils contributed extensively, while others participated only in the presentation. The prospective teacher identifies evidence of individual contributions, distinguishes equal marks from justified assessment and compares alternative procedures. The chosen approach is enacted in a simulated conversation, where listening, reasoning and responses to objections are observed. Feedback informs a revised decision. This is a proposed teaching example, not a report of an experiment.

Assessment criteria, indicators and development levels

Each component is linked to one criterion and three proposed indicators (Table 1). They describe observable performance and remain subject to expert review and empirical validation.

Table 1. Proposed criteria and observable indicators of professional culture

Criterion / component	Three observable indicators
Axiological-motivational	Explains professional purpose; justifies a value-based choice; accepts responsibility for action.
Cognitive-professional	Applies pedagogical concepts accurately; explains a situation theoretically; anticipates the consequences of alternatives.
Activity-technological	Constructs an action plan; implements a decision; adapts methods to the situation.
Communicative-ethical	Listens actively; offers respectful, reasoned explanations; resolves disagreements ethically.
Reflective-developmental	Identifies an error using evidence; revises a decision; sets a subsequent development goal.

At the high level, the student independently justifies, ethically enacts and improves a decision in a new situation. At the medium level, routine tasks are completed adequately, while complex situations require partial support. At the low level, knowledge and action are insufficiently integrated and regular guidance is needed. These descriptors concern demonstrated performance, not personal worth. A component-level profile should precede any overall judgement.

At least two complementary evidence sources should be compared for each criterion. A portfolio records the initial decision, feedback and revised response, rather than finished products alone. Raters discuss shared examples beforehand and resolve disagreements through indicator-specific evidence. Multiple tasks are needed before a developmental level is assigned. A total score must not conceal difficulties in ethical conduct, and feedback should address changeable actions rather than label a person. A value statement unsupported by behaviour indicates a need for further inquiry,

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not an immediate conclusion about character. These safeguards are part of the proposed assessment design. The proposed contribution lies in making the relationship between goal, activity, evidence and instructional decision explicit, not in the number of blocks. Applying constructive alignment [2] to professional culture means observing whether knowledge is enacted consistently with values and ethical communication. Feedback becomes educationally consequential when the student uses it in a subsequent action [7]. The model is an adaptation of established perspectives, not a claim of theoretical superiority.

Feedback serves two purposes. Individually, it identifies the knowledge, practical action or communication requiring support. Instructionally, it prompts a review of task complexity, content sufficiency and criterion clarity. Repeated difficulties across a group should therefore lead to examination of the learning conditions as well as student readiness. Written rationales, observed behaviour and reflective revisions should be considered together; self-reports alone cannot establish enacted professional culture. This design applies feedback and authentic-assessment principles to the present problem [5; 6]. The principal limitation is the absence of empirical validation. Further study should examine the relevance and coverage of the indicators through expert review, assess agreement between independent raters and compare initial performance, later performance and transfer to unfamiliar situations. Any evaluation of developmental effects also requires a defensible comparison design and documentation of implementation. Until then, the model and its descriptors remain theoretically grounded proposals.

The model integrates four blocks, five components, three cross-cutting pedagogical conditions and reflective feedback. Its central mechanism connects understanding a professional situation with justified action, evidence-based analysis and revision. Implementation should associate every task with an intended professional action, observable evidence and an explicit criterion, while retaining both initial and revised student decisions. Progress should be interpreted through responsible choices, ethical practice and increasingly independent improvement, rather than product quality alone. The model provides a coherent framework for instructional design and subsequent empirical testing.

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