

Exploring University-Based Teacher Educators' Identities through the Prism of Curriculum Planning

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Abstract

The professional identity of university-based teacher educators (UBTEs) is a multifaceted construct, with the curricular domain serving as a central component. This study aims to investigate the nature of the curricular field within the professional identity of twelve UBTEs (N=12). Drawing upon a phenomenological qualitative approach, data were gathered through semi-structured interviews and self-reflection documents. Thematic content analysis was employed to discern patterns and themes in UBTEs' perceptions of curriculum planning processes and of the curriculum of pedagogical supervision. Results revealed diverse perspectives, ranging from broad conceptualizations of curriculum planning to nuanced discussions on variations in curriculum design and adaptation in response to diverse needs of preservice teachers and UBTEs' interpretations. This study not only contributes to the ongoing discourse on UBTEs' professional identity, but also provides insights into curriculum development processes, particularly in the context of educational transitions such as those precipitated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Keywords: *Pedagogical Supervision, Curriculum Planning, Professional Identity, University-Based Teacher Educators.*

Introduction

In the field of education, the professional identity of university-based teacher educators plays a crucial role in shaping the quality and effectiveness of teacher training programs. (Suarez & McGrath, 2022). Central to this identity is the curricular field, encompassing the knowledge, skills, and attitudes related to curriculum planning and pedagogical supervision. Understanding the perceptions and experiences of UBTEs regarding curriculum planning is essential for enhancing teacher education practices and ensuring the delivery of relevant and effective training programs. This study aims to explore the professional identity of UBTEs by investigating their perceptions of curriculum planning processes and the curriculum of pedagogical supervision. The professional identity of UBTEs includes various dimensions, such as subject matter expertise, pedagogical knowledge, and interpersonal skills (Suarez & McGrath, 2022). Within this multifaceted identity, the curricular field is particularly significant, involving the design, implementation and evaluation of educational programs and materials (Bouckaert & Kools, 2018).

The discourse on teacher professional identity is central to the educational field. Beijaard, Koopman, and Schellings (2023) argue that teacher professional identity is intricately intertwined with collective identity, encompassing perceptions of the teacher's role and the conduct expected within professional contexts. Professional identity among UBTEs also comprises both personal and group identities (Liang et al., 2024). On a personal level, professional identities are constructed through a tapestry of experiences, beliefs, values, and interactions within the educational milieu. This process is influenced not only by self-perceptions but also by external perceptions, highlighting the dialogical nature of identity formation (Taylor, 2001). On a group level identities are shaped by membership in the broader professional community, reflecting shared norms, values, and practices. Additionally, collective identity denotes a shared understanding within the professional community regarding their roles and positions within both the school and the academic environments and society at large (Cordingley et al, 2019). Davey (2013) explored the multidisciplinary foundations of professional identity, emphasizing shared assumptions across personal, social, and cultural dimensions. This highlights the dynamic and multifaceted nature of professional identity, which evolves continuously throughout one's career. Some scholars concentrate on the process of identity formation

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among UBTEs and portray a myriad of identities, such as teacher, expert, researcher and learner (Liang et al., 2024), while others focus on essential aspects such as the curricular field. The curricular field involves the design, implementation, and evaluation of educational programs and materials, which are integral to curriculum planning skills (Bouckaert & Kools, 2018).

Cahapay (2020) defines curriculum as "a plan that has elements" (p. 1), grounded in Tyler's (1949) classic model of curriculum studies. He proposes four lenses for curriculum development: goals, content, approach, and evaluation. Cahapay and Anoba (2020) advocate for examining curriculum contents for potential reduction and integration, shifting approaches to online modes, and ensuring cohesive and logical evaluations. Zhao and Watterston (2021) argue that today's uncertain and rapidly changing reality necessitates a reconceptualization of the curriculum. The curriculum of teacher education is not static and may undergo changes. In England, for instance, it has taken an essentialist turn (Turvey, 2024) and is currently tightly regulated (Ellis & Childs, 2023), promoting a 'what works' agenda based on a partial and technicist positivistic evidence base (Hordern & Brooks, 2024). This stringent control has led UBTEs to question the purpose of their work and the methods by which PSTs learn (Steadman, 2024; Warren-Lee et al., 2023). It is also a call for agency and active engagement in the curricular field (Molla and Nolan, 2020).

UBTEs are expected to present expertise in curriculum development processes, integrate theory and practice, adapt to diverse learner needs, and foster inclusive learning environments (Suarez & McGrath, 2022; Lunenberg et al., 2014). Additionally, they often serve as role models, mentors, and facilitators, guiding pre-service and in-service teachers through the complexities of curriculum planning and pedagogical decision-making (Beeman-Cadwallader et al., 2014; MacPhail et al., 2019; Liang et al., 2023). UBTEs also play a crucial role in helping PSTs meet the challenges of the educational system and form a tighter link between college courses and field experiences (Zeichner, 2010; 2012).

Looking into the curriculum of teacher education may yield the categories of learning about teaching, which focus on curriculum instruction and teaching strategies, and on teaching about teaching. These categories provide modeling as well as a discussion of challenges that emerge through the teaching practice (Ping et al. (2018). Korthagen et al. (2006) also emphasized the significance of learning from experience and reflection. Additional categories were suggested, such as redirecting the focus from the curricular elements of pedagogy to the PSTs, and creating meaningful linkages between schools, universities and PSTs – an ecological perspective of partnerships (Heikkinen, 2020). To bridge the gap between theory and practice, between universities or teacher education colleges and the field, i.e. schools (Zeichner, 2010; 2012) UBTEs as curriculum developers should mentor reflective practitioners who cater to the challenges, needs and actions of students. To put the curriculum of teacher education into practice, UBTEs should enhance professional development and a university school ecology as well as demonstrate the learning and instruction methods in teacher education programs (Tep, 2024). In addition, UBTEs should be familiar with the theoretical field of curriculum planning, including key concepts in curriculum design, such as a structured curriculum, an evolving curriculum and a student-centered curriculum.

From a social ecological viewpoint, personal and contextual factors can be recognized in UBTEs' identities (Bronfenbrenner, 1976). The personal factors may include personality, agency, and beliefs. The contextual factors relate to the multifaceted context in which the UBTEs operate and involve colleagues, stakeholders, PSTs, policies and the curriculum. Bouckaert and Kools (2018) restated UBTEs' role in curriculum development (Lunenberg et al., 2014). They looked at the perceptions and practices of 75 UBTEs who identified themselves as curriculum developers and pointed to five practices: developing a professional vision of their responsibility toward the curriculum, focusing on pedagogical principles, attempting to maintain consistency and coherence within the curriculum, applying updated theoretical and practical insights, and developing materials.

The professional development of UBTEs has been studied, namely the significance of their concerns, activities, and environment (Van der Klink et al., 2017). Workplace learning has received attention in recent years (Billett, 2020) advocating the notion that people acquire much of their professional competence in practice and continue learning through their professional activities (Ping et al., 2018). Workplace learning bears considerations for curriculum in terms of goals, enactments and participative experiences. A guided

learning perspective in the workplace yields pedagogical principles (Billett, 2020), since vocational practice is gained via guidance of a more capable partner – a Vygotskian constructivist principle. The social and physical environment may lead to the enactment of the 'learning curriculum'. The learning curriculum is shaped by both the immediate social practice that individuals engage in and the legacy of previous social practices that comprise their personal histories and their cognitive experience. According to Bouckaert and Kools (2018) UBTEs engage in professional preparation regarding curriculum development in the role of curriculum developers through informal learning with their colleagues.

Supervision of PSTs evolved to serve the goals of educational intervention (Coimbra et al., 2020). It is defined as the theory and practice for the purpose of regulating teaching and learning in the educational context. The utmost goal of pedagogical supervision is to improve pedagogical performance and teaching skills (Goodwin et al, 2014). UBTEs work primarily with PSTs in a college or university setting, and support PSTs in schools that are in a partnership with a university or a college. UBTEs instruct the PSTs to base their practices on appropriate theory and apply it to the context where they practice teaching and develop a teacher identity (European Commission, 2013). On the one hand, as higher education academics the UBTEs are entitled to academic freedom when designing the syllabus for the courses they teach, yet on the other hand, their practices might be hindered by local policies. The roles of UBTEs have become even more complex due to the influences of post modernistic neoliberal approaches on the educational system. In the United States of America and in England neoliberal currents have pushed teacher education towards heightened standardization, increased subject content knowledge, and pressured testing in competence-based skill areas (Beach and Bagley, 2013; Zeichner, 2010).

Within this theoretical framework of complexities and contradictory forces in the field of education the purpose of the study was to look at UBTEs' perceptions of the process of curriculum planning and their understandings of the curriculum of pedagogical supervision. The first research question was: How do UBTEs perceive the meaning of the process of curriculum planning? The second research question focused on pedagogical supervision: What are UBTEs' understandings of the curriculum of pedagogical supervision?

Methodology

Research Context

The study took places in a teacher training college and involved the UBTEs who supervised PSTs. The PSTs were retraining students enrolled in the M Teach program, a two-year program for a master's degree in teaching in addition to a teaching qualification. In their first year of studies in the program the PSTs were placed at schools that were in partnership with the college (professional development schools in a PDS model) as part of a clinical model of practicum – Academy Class. The clinical model involved a process of inquiry, reflection and meaning making of PSTs' needs (Burn & Mutton, 2015). At the end of the first year of their studies the PSTs were expected to be qualified to teach a discipline at a junior high or high school. The context of placement included clinical experiences in teaching classes and individuals (Haselkorn & Hamneress, 2008). Among UBTEs' roles in the process of teacher training were establishing contacts with the school staff, familiarizing with PSTs, mediating the school environment to PSTs, providing counseling and ongoing support in the planning and reflecting phases, and assessing the PSTs. UBTEs were expected to promote collaborations between the stakeholders involved in teacher education (MOFET Institute, 2021) and link pedagogy performed by PSTs with the courses at the college, primarily with the course on pedagogy – research practicum.

Method

This study adopts a phenomenological qualitative approach to explore the perceptions of UBTEs regarding curriculum planning processes and the curriculum of pedagogical supervision. Phenomenology is well-suited for investigating lived experiences and subjective interpretations, allowing researchers to uncover the essence of participants' experiences (Creswell, 2013).

Participants

The research population consists of twelve UBTEs from a teacher training college in the central region of Israel, selected through convenience sampling based on personal communication. Two of them had two years of experience as teacher educators, eight had more than five years of experience as UBTEs, and two of them were experienced UBTEs who were also in a position of coordinating placement for PSTs. Among them were two males and ten females. They were experts in various disciplines: One in the field of music education, one in biology, one in literature, two in Bible studies, two in language education (first language), two in foreign language education (English), and three in the discipline of mathematics.

Data Collection, Analysis and Ethics

Data collection methods employed a combination of open research tools: semi-structured in-depth open interviews and self-reflection documents of all participants, which provided rich insights into UBTEs' perceptions and experiences related to curriculum planning and pedagogical supervision and the role of the curriculum in their professional identity.

All documents obtained through the above-mentioned research tools were content analyzed (Creswell, 2013). The open interviews (Robinson, 2014), which lasted between 50 and 90 minutes, posed the overarching questions: "Describe your professional trajectory as a UBTE", "What is the core of the curriculum of pedagogical supervision, in your opinion? "What changes, if any, have you made in the curriculum of pedagogical supervision during the Covid 19 period?", "Is there a curriculum for pedagogical supervision, and if there is, what kind of a curriculum is it?". The interviews provided a platform for participants to express their perceptions, attitudes, feelings, and teaching practices, facilitating a comprehensive understanding of curriculum perceptions and identity formation.

In addition to interviews, in the twelve reflective documents that were written by UBTEs following one semester of supervision, UBTEs described their goals, challenges and successes in pedagogical supervision, and critically discussed current curricula and policy in teacher education. The written reflections offered valuable perspectives on the challenges, solutions, and successes encountered by UBTEs in addition to their educational, pedagogical credos.

The data underwent thematic analysis following Nowell et al.'s (2017) six phases of inductive thematic analysis to ensure trustworthiness. The analysis began with researchers familiarizing themselves with the entire dataset, followed by coding all data in the subsequent phase. Once potential themes were identified in the corpus, they were reviewed and refined to accurately reflect the gathered data from all research tools. Additionally, consultation with colleagues, who were experts in the field, took place to validate and enhance the credibility of the identified themes. This phase involved examining the coherence and relevance of each theme in relation to the research questions. The identified themes were then discussed alongside relevant research literature, incorporating etic categories, to make sense of the results by aligning them with existing literature in the field.

The final phase involved synthesizing the findings, presenting them in a coherent and meaningful manner and providing supporting evidence from the data. The six phases of thematic analysis helped uncover meaningful insights and generate rich, nuanced interpretations regarding the UBTEs as curriculum developers. The analysis also contributed to the understanding of the role of the curriculum of pedagogical supervision among the participants, and how it cultivated their professional identity as UBTEs. Informed consent of all the participants was obtained, and they could withdraw from the research at any stage. Their anonymity was ensured using pseudonyms. Moreover, this study was formally approved by the College Institutional Ethics Committee (certificate no. 2022092901).

Findings

Content analysis of the collected data yielded two major findings, each relating to a research question. The first one tackled UBTEs' perceptions of curriculum planning. The second related to UBTEs' perceptions

of the curriculum of pedagogical guidance. In terms of curriculum planning processes, participants emphasized the importance of understanding the relevance of curriculum design to their roles as UBTEs.

The Meaning of the Process of Curriculum Planning

Perceptions relating to curriculum planning can be found on a continuum between structural perceptions and ecological perceptions, between reductionist perceptions of the curriculum and broader ones. Structural, reductionist perceptions of the curriculum illustrate components within the curriculum and skills. In the following example the skills receive emphasis: "deepening the knowledge and skills in the discipline" (Tracy, reflection), and in another example components of planning, goals, and time are stated, as well as skills that must be acquired and practiced:

"PSTs have a limited understanding of concept: planning. We discussed the significance of writing a lesson plan that included goals and sub goals, timing each activity, the quantity of language and instruction and practicing language in context" (Irene, reflection).

Broader views of curriculum planning processes depict larger units within the curricular field, such as school curricula, the school subject curriculum, the curriculum of education and the curriculum of the discipline: "There are various important topics that deserve attention: the study of the discipline, matriculation exams, delving into the depth of curricula, assessment measures in literature, education lessons and more" (Korine, reflection).

Another indicator of a broader, ecological concept of the curriculum is the attitude of UBTEs towards the aspect of assessment. In the following example assessment has evolved into a procedure performed by multiple assessors in which the UBTE functions both as giving and receiving assessment:

"...there was a reciprocal feedback conversation. We co-taught, the PST and I, and the PST gave me feedback, and the other PSTs provided feedback to both of us. I told them I would be happy to learn from them" (Helena, interview).

Another UBTE has pointed to the significance of the assessment component in the process of professional development of the three parties: PSTs, teachers, and UBTEs: "In triads of PSTs, teachers and UBTEs I see a meaningful process of learning and professional development. I would be happy to have such feedback conferences with additional teachers" (Zoei, reflection). The inclusion of the assessment element via equity in relationships rather than a hierarchical structure is a marker of an ecological interpretation of the curriculum.

A UBTE who acted as a curriculum developer perceived both the school curricula and the college curricula as opportunities for creating changes. She has taken upon herself the role of leveraging a new pedagogy of a school subject:

"I have changed the way the Bible teacher teaches Bible lessons, the way the PST teaches, and the way the students learn. Pedagogical supervision should create a change, it should be interesting for the children to study Bible (Gafni, interview).

It appears that the curriculum shapes and is shaped by UBTEs who adjust it to their preliminary beliefs: "each UBTE interprets the curriculum and brings in the persona. There is a UBTE who needs conversations about educational perceptions, yet there is another who knows what she is doing" (Helga, interview).

An additional aspect that illustrates an ecological perception of the curriculum is the inclusion of the concept of collegiality and teamwork with diverse partners, UBTEs, teachers and stakeholders at schools: "We work with the schools and the teachers as a team, not as individuals" (Korine, reflection).

The reciprocal and developmental nature of the curriculum was demonstrated through the collaboration of a UBTE and a lecturer in the pedagogy course at the college: "Learning began in the pedagogy course,

was expanded in the field and then returned to the course. Once there is collaboration between the course lecturer and the UBTE in the field it is amazing." (Helena, interview). Additional evidence for collegiality can be found in the recognition that not all UBTEs share the same views and yet find ways to collaborate: "collegiality among UBTEs. How to work in a team when there is no consensus and differences arise" (Helga, interview).

The ecological views concerning the curriculum expressed a systemic viewpoint that considers collaborations among stakeholders and an encompassing view of the educational system:

"Discussions of various themes that emerge from observations of lessons where team members of the school, the principal, the coordinator of the program take part, on the verge of a process of change of innovative instruction, active and collaborative learning, PBL, challenges, successes, the place of the educational system" (Sally, reflection).

The social construct within the school and the essence of the identity of a PST go far beyond elements within a curriculum. They reflect a holistic, systemic and ecological view of the developmental process of activism within the curriculum, far beyond the goal statement in the curriculum:

"There should be an understanding that the PST stands not only in front of a class, but a staff room, has to be sensitive to teachers and listen to their conversations, has to pay attention to students and contact administration, the management team and take part in events. There is room for experiencing the whole arena, all its parts, and not merely a specific goal (Helena, interview)

UBTEs' Perceptions of the Curriculum of Pedagogical Supervision

When UBTEs referred to the curriculum of pedagogical supervision two major themes emerged: rigidity and flexibility. Both themes related to the following aspects: content of the curriculum, the discipline (math, literature, science, language, Bible), the UBTE, and the PST. On a continuum between rigidity and flexibility most UBTEs perceived themselves as flexible in most of the above aspects.

The Content of the Curriculum of Pedagogical Supervision

Data analysis yielded a myriad of interpretations of the curriculum of pedagogical supervision by UBTEs, which demonstrated the asset of UBTEs as curriculum developers. Two UBTEs highlighted two components in the curriculum of pedagogical supervision, which were referred to as eminent – PSTs' educational initiatives and the action reflection process. The rationale for including PSTs' initiatives in the curriculum is an overarching view that takes into consideration the contribution of PSTs to the school and the benefits of initiatives for PSTs' professional development: "PSTs' initiatives are important. They promote progress according to the plan as an integral part of the school culture" (Dolly, interview). Initiatives carried out by PSTs contribute to the PSTs' integration into the school: "The plan for intensive activity on a day of practicum, integration into school life and carrying out PSTs' initiatives" (Sally, reflection).

Another interpretation of the curriculum of pedagogical supervision tends to be more academic than field based. It links the components of the curriculum of pedagogical supervision to the macro curriculum of teacher education and the academic courses, such as the process of action research: "the curriculum of action research is the core curriculum of pedagogical supervision: planning, executing the plan and reflecting" (Dolly, interview). Creating the link between the academic courses and placement gained significance: "The PSTs and I discussed how to link what is done at school to the course of research practicum" (Helena, interview). An additional interpretation views the identity of the PST as the leading axis of the curriculum of pedagogical supervision: "I planned three foci for PSTs: "Me as an educator, me as a math teacher, my communication with students, students with difficulties, in the integration of those three foci" (Robert, reflection). A critical interpretation of the existing curriculum of pedagogical supervision arose from a similar view of the significance of identity formation of PSTs: "The process of

contemplating the professional identity of the PST does not take place. Who is the PST and why does the PST aspire to become a teacher?" (Don, reflection).

The opportunity to reexamine the curriculum of pedagogical supervision arose in the period of Covid 19: "Covid-19 has brought about a component of flexibility in the curricular perception. Not merely goals and a pedagogical perception" (Dolly, interview). The emotional aspect became more pronounced in the curriculum of pedagogical supervision due to the changes in the learning environment:

"During the Covid-19 period the PSTs brought games, active learning, yet none of the students participated, not even in the shared documents. The lesson did not follow any professional criterion that I had known. Hence, I designed a new curriculum. Its essence was emotional support, support, think how to plan online lessons" (Helga, interview).

It appears that UBTEs adopted the notion of an evolving curriculum with respect to pedagogical supervision, as one UBTE phrased it: "The plan is still changing, constantly" (Robert, reflection). Another UBTE described how she had to make changes and provided the rationale for it: "I have to change and redesign according to the changes. Otherwise, I won't be relevant. Yes! Flexibility A dynamic role, with the teachers at school as well." (Helga, interview). The UBTE compared the curriculum to a "cloth that can have different sizes and various colors" (Helga, interview). There is a format of adjusting the curriculum: "There is a curriculum, but it is recommended to talk with it, adjust it, like something developmental, and that format is there to protect PSTs" (Helga, interview).

In addition to the evolving nature of the curriculum there appeared be dynamics and flexibility in the order of the curricular elements:

"Honestly, it is not something I plan ahead of time. There is dynamics and it may happen that we teach something first rather than another, not according to the order we planned. It may change momentarily. It cannot be planned a long time ahead of time. It flows and adapts to the needs. We cater to whatever is needed" (Helena, interview).

The Discipline within the Curriculum of Pedagogical Supervision

The discipline, whether it was music, math, literature or other was perceived as the crown of the curriculum of pedagogical supervision. Since PSTs were practicing teaching in high school a thorough acquaintance with the discipline was considered as a pre-requisite for a good lesson: "there are many important topics that merit treatment: pedagogy of the discipline of literature, matriculation exam, and an in-depth study of school curricula" (Korin, reflection). In addition, assigning more time to the discussion of the discipline with the PSTs gained significance: "The discipline is the weakest link in the domain of study; there are gaps in knowledge of music, and little time" (Don, reflection). Conversely, one UBTE exemplified flexibility by going beyond the discipline: "We should go beyond the discipline of language. The goals of practicum extend content knowledge and pedagogical know how" (Helena, interview).

Self-Perceptions of UBTEs Regarding the Curriculum of Pedagogical Supervision

UBTEs' descriptions regarding the curriculum of pedagogical supervision demonstrated traditional versus innovative perceptions. There was awareness to the notion of traditional versus flexible: "I have a fixed plan in pedagogical supervision that is flexible to the maximum potential I can accept. Well, I am not a flexible person myself" (Helga, interview). In another example, flexibility is portrayed: "On the verge of a process of change, innovative and effective pedagogies, active and collaborative learning, project-based learning and more" (Sally, reflection). There was a belief that professional development and learning of UBTEs should be carried out on a weekly basis: "It is required that the UBTE performs a weekly reflection regarding their practices" (Don, reflection).

The PST within the Curriculum of Pedagogical Supervision

Catering to the diversified needs of PSTs was a marker of flexibility and most UBTEs related to it. Nevertheless, a few UBTEs assigned priority to the contents of the curriculum over the needs of PSTs, as exemplified in the following examples: "I presented the goals of pedagogical supervision and tasks to be performed, focused tasks through which it would be possible to promote and ensure the professional development of PSTs" (Tracy, reflection).

Conversely, another view put the PSTs and their needs at the center of professional development rather than on focused tasks: "I would like to create conditions for professional development for the PSTs. I would like to look closely at the PST and recognize a process of development, what I may contribute, and a personal treatment" (Helga, interview). The UBTE had to design a personal curriculum to be adjusted to the needs of specific student teachers. She put differentiated instruction into practice and expressed views of equity in education by catering to a variety of educational needs: "I had a PST where a change in the curriculum had to be administered. She needed to learn a lot. How was I going to guide her? How could I help her grow professionally? I will find all sorts of paths together with her (Helga, interview).

Attending to Specific Needs of PSTs Was Expressed by Another UBTE

"Talking about a uniform curriculum in training is not appropriate because you need to know the needs of each PST and adapt training accordingly. For some PSTs, you need to deepen their knowledge base in teaching English as a foreign language, while for others; the focus is on pedagogical practices. Although both areas need attention, the emphasis differs depending on the PST" (Dolly, interview).

Discussion

The findings regarding the professional identity of UBTEs reveal that their perceptions of the curricular field are insufficiently reflective. UBTEs articulated various conceptualizations of curriculum planning, ranging from broad, ecological perspectives to more focused discussions on specific components associated with content and pedagogy. Additionally, UBTEs expressed diverse views on curriculum variations, highlighting the need for flexibility and adaptability in response to individual student needs and contextual factors.

The perceptions of UBTEs concerning the curricular dimension of their professional identity warrant a comprehensive examination extending beyond the descriptive findings. These findings address various conceptualizations of curriculum planning, which include broad ecological perspectives and focused discussions on specific components within the curriculum. The discourse on curriculum planning reveals its intricate, subjective, and constructivist nature, encompassing diverse perspectives on content, methods, learning environments, sequences, and time resources (Cahapay, 2020).

A comprehensive analysis of the broader, systemic, and ecological context—specifically, curriculum planning—is imperative for understanding the strategic component integral to UBTEs' professional identity. The intricate, subjective, and constructivist nature of curriculum planning is evident in the diverse perspectives on content, methods, learning environments, sequences, and time resources (Bouckaert & Kools, 2018). Furthermore, the curricular concepts that oscillate between broad and narrow perspectives are not only pre-reflective but also lack systematic and comprehensive reference to the core components of a curriculum.

Drawing on Tyler's classic model (Tyler, 1949), curriculum planning is delineated into four core components: purpose, content, attitude, and evaluation. Even other systematic constructions proposed by Zhao and Watterson (2021) did not appear here in an organized and thorough manner. They advocate for an exploration of fundamental questions in curriculum planning: why, what, how, where, and when to teach. Although these questions are present in UBTEs' discourse, they lack systematic construction.

University-Based Teacher Educators (UBTEs) face the intricate task of navigating the complexities of curriculum planning, a challenge that involves balancing the demands of flexibility with the need for a standardized, structured approach. This complexity arises not only from the multiplicity of perspectives but also from the inevitable collisions and conflicts among stakeholders with different views on what the curriculum should achieve and how it should be implemented.

A key issue in this context is deciding between fostering a flexible and evolving curriculum that can adapt to diverse needs and maintaining a uniform curriculum that ensures consistency across the program. Research findings indicate that many UBTEs tend to favor a dominant orientation in their approach, often at the expense of effectively managing the inherent complexities of curriculum development. This tendency can undermine the broader goal of coherence within teacher education, which, as numerous studies suggest, is essential for the successful development of PSTs' professional identities (Richmond et al., 2019; Sandoval et al., 2020).

Coherence in teacher education has traditionally been defined as the extent to which faculty members agree on the vision and goals of a program and the degree to which the course structure reflects this agreement (Tatto, 1998). However, this definition may oversimplify the reality of curriculum planning. Coherence should be understood as a dynamic, ongoing process that involves negotiating alignment among stakeholders who often hold diverse and sometimes conflicting views on the goals of teacher education and the methods to achieve them (Levine et al, 2023). Rather than viewing coherence as a fixed state, it should be seen as a continuous effort to align these differing perspectives.

Conflict, which naturally arises from differing interpretations of shared visions and goals, should not be perceived as a purely negative force within this process. On the contrary, conflict can serve as a valuable opportunity for growth, allowing PSTs to engage with a variety of educational ideas and orientations. This engagement fosters educational pluralism within the ecosystem and ultimately contributes to the development of PSTs' unique professional identities. The exposure to diverse viewpoints equips future teachers with a broader understanding of educational practices, making them more adaptable and reflective practitioners.

The research findings emphasize the need for UBTEs to deepen their engagement with curricular thinking, particularly in relation to their professional identities. This aligns with contemporary perspectives, such as those of Molla and Nolan (2020), who argue that a strong professional identity is shaped by active and engaged teachers. These educators, who see themselves as creators, are deeply involved in addressing significant questions within the strategic realm of curriculum planning. Their active participation is crucial in shaping the professional identities of their students, who will, in turn, become the next generation of educators.

In conclusion, the process of curriculum planning in teacher education is fraught with complexity and conflict, but these challenges should be embraced rather than avoided. By viewing coherence as a dynamic, ongoing process and recognizing the value of conflict in promoting educational pluralism, UBTEs can foster a more inclusive and reflective approach to curriculum development. This approach not only enhances the coherence of the program but also plays a pivotal role in building the professional identities of both UBTEs and PSTs.

Conclusions

This study offers valuable insights into the professional identity of UBTEs and their perceptions of curriculum planning processes and pedagogical supervision. By exploring the lived experiences of UBTEs, this research contributes to our understanding of the complex interplay between UBTEs' identity and curriculum development practices. This study provides further evidence to the role of UBTEs as curriculum developers, designers and reformers. It also highlights the need to anchor UBTEs' endeavors and practices in the discipline of curriculum planning. The UBTEs in this study exemplified intuitive knowledge of curriculum planning yet did not specify the theoretical concepts of the discipline. They referred to changes in the curriculum instead of using the term – an evolving curriculum, related to fixed

elements instead of a structured curriculum, and described catering to PSTs' needs rather than conceptualize a student-centered curriculum. The findings underscore the importance of ongoing professional development and support for UBTEs, particularly in navigating educational transitions and emerging challenges such as those brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. Future research directions may include further exploration of the factors influencing UBTEs' perceptions and practices in curriculum planning, as well as the development of innovative strategies for enhancing teacher education programs in response to evolving educational needs.

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