Possible influences of Arabic-Islamic culture on the reflective practices proposed for an education degree at the Higher Colleges of Technology in the United Arab Emirates

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Abstract

This article critically examines the compatibility of United Arab Emirates culture and values with the assumptions of reflective practice currently being written into a new teacher education degree programme. The curriculum that is being developed relies heavily on the notions of reflective practice as a method of professional development. The local culture, political and public institutions are thoroughly inculcated with Arab-Islamic values that may not accord with the assumptions underlying such practices. The author’s concerns are discussed about the trainee teachers’ lifestyle and experiences that may hinder engagement in their own learning processes, as well as the Arab-Islamic codes of behaviour that may pose serious obstacles to the implementation of such practices.
Arab-Islamic codes of behaviour that may pose serious obstacles to the implementation of reflective strategies, especially interactions between men and women and between superior and subordinate within educational settings. The author concludes that reflection, as conceived and implemented in the West, may not be in the best interests of the student teachers if they wish to teach in local schools.

Keywords
Teacher training; Reflective practices; Methodologies; Cultural diversity; Islamic culture

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Dr Patricia Richardson has recently returned to Europe having taught at Abu Dhabi Women’s College, part of the Higher Colleges of Technology (HCT) in the United Arab Emirates, since 1995 where she taught Information and Learning Technologies on the Bachelor of Education courses. Before her tenure at the Higher Colleges of Technology, she taught business and computing subjects in tertiary institutions in England and Australia and has been involved in teacher training and IT consultancy in the UK. She was awarded her MEd from Leicester University, UK in 1987 and has since
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