



EFL Pre-service Teacher Profile: A Level of Reflection Regarding Professionalism Readiness

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Abstract

LPTK (*Educational University*) has a function and role in preparing professional prospective teachers. One of the indicators that must have is the ability to reflect on learning. The function of learning reflection has the aim of improving sustainable learning. The researcher would like to focus this study to find out how the level of reflection and to examine the level of reflection. This research involves qualitative research. The data collection technique in this research is documentation of articles related to the research problem and the interview. The research instrument in this study is the reflection journal done by students when they have completed the learning. Then, the researcher conducts interviews with students regarding matters related to the results of the data. According to the results of the reflective learning journal worksheets conducted by EFL preservice teachers, there are (76.47%) at level C, (17.65%) at level D, and (5.88%) at level B. EFL preservice teachers are unable to reach the highest level of reflection because a) Lack of understanding of reflective learning journals b) Difficulties getting to begin writing. This study concludes that the level of reflection level of EFL pre-service teachers are on average. Reflective learning journals need to be done regularly in every lesson to increase the level of reflection. Preparing professional EFL preservice teachers require a significant increase in the level of reflection.

Keywords: EFL preservice teachers, professionalism, reflection level

Introduction

As a center of knowledge, universities have an important role in producing superior human resources, both in terms of intellectual, emotional, and spiritual. Good quality human resources are the result of good education. The role of LPTK (*Educational University*) is to produce prospective teachers who are advanced in the fields of science, technology, morals, and professionalism in the teaching profession (Wulansari, 2021). LPTK (*Educational University*) has a function and role in preparing professional prospective teachers. One of the indicators that professional teachers must have is the ability to reflect on

learning (Nugraha et al, 2020). The function of learning reflection for professional teachers has the aim of improving sustainable learning.

The most important aspect of the higher education experience is the ability to reflect on learning. Students' level of reflection reflects the extent to which they are able to evaluate, explore understanding and relate their learning experiences to a broader context. The importance of students' level of reflection has been increasingly emphasized by higher education institutions as well as in the world of work (Engelbertink, 2020). This ability can prepare students to become critical thinkers, problem



solvers and can make them effective and solutive leaders in the future. Therefore, prospective teachers must be taught and equipped with the ability to reflect on their learning. One of the methods to measure students' learning reflection ability is by using reflective learning journal.

Reflective learning in the context of learning is an intellectual and affective activity for students to explore their experiences to a new understanding (Ritunga et al, 2018). Criticism and assumptions about the problem-solving process are the scope of reflective learning. This can lead to deep critical reflection so that it can change the framework of meaning into a transformation of perspective. Therefore, critical reflection can awaken; analyze knowledge, and student learning experiences to achieve a deep understanding of perspective transformation.

In addition, reflective learning journals are an effective tool to reflect on learning experiences and document one's personal development. In addition, reflective learning journals are a very effective tool to be used in various educational contexts (Henderson, 2018). Encouraging critical thinking, integrating theory and practice and improving writing skills are the benefits that can result from reflective learning journals (Apsari, 2018) . This is because reflective learning journals create a space for individuals to systematically reflect on their learning, understanding and experience during the learning process.

The use of reflective learning journal in learning is an important parameter in measuring the level of reflection in students (Bruno & Dell'Aversana, 2018). Assessment of students' level of reflection using reflective learning journal can be an effective tool to measure students' understanding and personal development.

There is significant research that reflective learning journals can be used in various aspects of education. Denton (2018) revealed that reflective learning journals can help students in reducing students' anxiety and self-confidence that often arise during the learning process. Another study from Rinanto et al (2015) revealed that the use of reflective learning journals combined with inquiry learning was proven to improve analytical thinking skills in high school students in Surakarta. The results of the study showed that there was a varied increase in students' analytical thinking skills by using reflective learning journals in each cycle.

Previous studies have primarily focused on student-oriented reflective learning journals, which concentrate on reducing learning disorders experienced by students. Then, combining reflective learning journals with a learning method can enhance analytical thinking skills. This research applies a reflective learning journal to investigate the level of reflection of EFL pre-service teachers. The researcher confidentially aims to find out the level of



reflection and examine the level of reflection of EFL preservice teachers.

Theoretical Review

Reflective Learning Journal

Reflection has an important role in teaching and education (Chang, 2019). The term of reflective learning is learning that provides opportunities for students to be actively involved in the learning process by involving their own experiences as learning materials (Muhammad & Faridah, 2019). Reflective Learning provides a chance to show reflective abilities in critical thinking, reflective practice, and reflectivity. In a number of disciplines, such as law, business, health, and education, the notion of reflective learning has been gaining significant traction. Reflective learning is widely used in educational programs and teacher development, in addition to its appeal, in the field of education. RP is generally accepted as one of the models in education that must be supported, particularly in teacher development programs, as a result of its appeal. In addition, Reflective learning is an ordinary part of life that can occur if we choose to do it on purpose. (Thompson, 2021). In other words, Reflective learning is a learning activity that does not originate from books but uses life experiences as a reference so that it is often known that Reflective learning is learning through experience.

Reflective learning has the potential to unite various reform initiatives in education. Because, in its early phases, Reflective learning will involve the development of new perspectives. This definitely necessitates synthetic and evaluation abilities in order to integrate new knowledge with previous knowledge by creating innovative ways to solve problems and anticipate all future possibilities. So it can be interpreted that Reflective learning is one of the activities carried out in each learning session which aims to review previous knowledge which can later be combined with new knowledge so that it can evaluate all forms of strengths and weaknesses within oneself which aims to improve and predict in further learning.

A reflective learning journal is a sequential and dated series of ideas and events that may include the author's responses and reflections on the events and ideas that occurred (Stevens & Cooper, 2020). Reflective learning journals are recognized as an important instrument in promoting active learning (Thorpe, 2004), (Colomer et al, 2020), written documents that students create as they imagine ideas, events, or interactions over a period of time to achieve goals, receive insights into self-awareness and learning (Thorpe, 2005), (Feize and Faver, 2019), and serve as evidence of students' learning journeys (Brockbank & McGill, 2007), (El Miedany, 2019).

Koole et al (2011) show a complete eclectic model, which describes reflection in three phases: 1. Reviewing the experience, 2. Critical analysis, and 3. Reflective outcome (Figure 1).



Figure 1. Phases of reflection

In addition, Scanlan and Chernorma's (1997) in Arthur et al (2021) describe an effective model that can be easily communicated and used in the Reflective learning journals process there are as awareness, critical analysis, and learning (Figure 2).

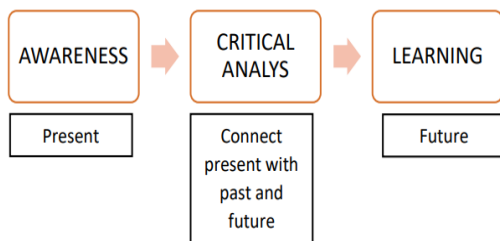


Figure 2. Reflective Learning Journal Process

The first stage explains that reflection is awareness, where this awareness may be stimulated by some uncomfortable thoughts and feelings, or positive thoughts or feelings

towards the learning situation that has been experienced. Without which reflection cannot take place and work.

The second stage is personally analyzing the situation critically, bringing in relevant knowledge and experience and applying new knowledge resulting from the analysis process. This stage should involve critical thinking and evaluation as well as self-examination accompanied by growing self-awareness.

The final stage involves developing a new perspective based on the critical analysis and applying the new knowledge to the situation (learning) being reflected upon. The new perspective can be characterized by affective, cognitive and behavioral changes.

Assesment of Level Reflection

The assessment's goal is to acquire objective, accurate, complete, and relevant data about the condition of an object (Asmita & Fitriani, 2022). Assessment is a process that require decision making on the standardization of data that are relevant for educational reflection. This is important when attempting to collect and analyze data in order to improve the learning process (Nisa et al, 2018).

Level reflection will most likely be neglected if it is not examined (Bourner, 2001). Students may dislike the assessment that results from their reflective activities during the process. They assume that the reflective learning journal that they are currently working on is personal, or they are



unsure that the assessment will be reliable and accurate.

Aside from that, all students have concerns about the assessments. To ensure that the entire framework is beneficial, reflective assessments may need to be used to accomplish numerous objectives. The level of reflection will be used as an assessment based on the concept of depth of reflection (Sandars, 2009). In this study, researchers used Sandar (2009) to measure the depth of reflection levels in students. The guideline framework and the grid of the levels of reflection form can be seen in the figure 3 below.

Grade A: Experiencing an event(s) has changed, or confirmed, how you experience an event(s). You may wish to change how you respond to similar event(s) in the future. You provide an explanation, including references to other literature, eg articles or books.
Grade B: Involves judgement – what went well, or less well and why.
Grade C: Describing an event – recognising how it affects your feelings, attitudes and beliefs and/or questioning what has been learnt and comparing it to previous experience.
Grade D: Describing an event – recognising that something is important but not explaining why.
Grade E: Describing an event – repeating the details of an event without offering any interpretation.
Grade F: Describing an event – poor description of an event.

Figure 3. Grid of Level Reflection

Method

This research involves qualitative research, which will produce descriptive data in the form of words. The qualitative method approach is research that produces descriptive data in the form of words or spoken words from the object being observed (Bodgan and Taylor, 2013) and (Nassaji, 2020). The objective of this study is to conduct a thorough analysis of instances to ascertain the scale of reflection on EFL

preservice teachers. This research conduct on students in majoring in English education semester 6th at the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education of Sultan Ageng Tirtayasa University which is located at Jl. Ciwaru Raya, Cipare, Kec. Serang, Serang City, Banten 42117.

The study entailed conducting interviews with 17 participants who were EFL pre-service teachers in the English education department at Untirta. Additionally, documentations of reflection journals were collected from the EFL pre-service teachers. This is required to obtain accurate and reliable data. Documentation is a technique in finding data or variables from books, articles, journals, papers (Arikunto, 2010) (Roulston & Choi, 2018).

The research instrument in this study is the learning reflection journal articles done by students when they have completed the learning. The collection of documentation is intended to assess the level of students' reflection in learning. In analyzing and measuring the level of reflection on EFL preservice teachers, researchers use Sandar's (2009) level of reflective practice (figure 1). Then, the researcher conducts interviews with students regarding matters related to the results of the data that have been analyzed in order to strengthen the results of the research data analysis.

The data were investigated using the interactive data analysis presented by Saldana et al. (2014), which includes data

reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. The flow of the data analysis is presented in Figure 4.

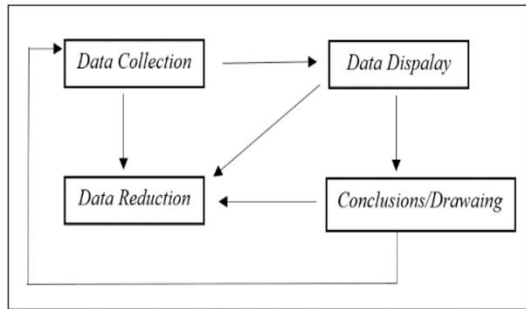


Figure 4. Model Data Analysis

Result

The researcher analyzed the data based on the reflective learning journal of EFL preservice teachers. This work aims to determine the level of reflection of EFL preservice teachers through the journals. In analyzing the journals, the researcher used Sandars (2009) to measure the results of EFL preservice teachers reflective learning journals in determining the level of reflection. The results of the analysis in figure 5 showed that there were 13 EFL preservice teachers at level C, 4 at level D, and 1 EFL preservice teacher at level B.

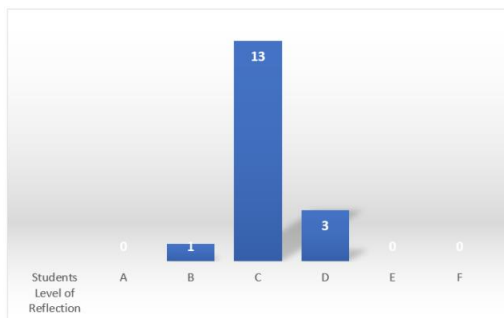


Figure 5. Result of EFL Preservice Teacher's Level of Reflection

The figure 4 above explains that most of their level of reflection is at level C, followed by level D, then only one EFL preservice teacher got level B and none of them are at the level A.

The results of the reflective learning journal worksheets collected will be utilized to determine the level of reflection of EFL preservice teachers. According to the results of the reflective learning journal worksheets conducted by EFL preservice teachers, there are (76.47%) at level C, (17.65%) at level D, and (5.88%) at level B.

It has been found that EFL preservice teachers at level C are capable of articulately describe the experiences they possessed, and they have an impact on their feelings and beliefs. It is apparent that certain beliefs or issues are highly significant to them, and they challenge their own assumptions by drawing comparisons with past experiences.

At level D, it was discovered that EFL preservice teachers at this level can describe the events they encountered with little information, they feel there is something uncommon or a phenomena which is crucial to them, but they cannot clarify why it is essential to them in greater detail.

Furthermore, at level B, it has been identified that EFL preservice teachers are able to articulate and describe the events or phenomena they had experience chronologically, as well as they experience they put toward their writing, they can evaluate and recognize whether some factor



is going well or not, they might ask themselves why it can happen, and they can entail their feelings and experiences.

At Level A, the highest level of reflection, EFL preservice teachers are expected to provide a detailed account of their experiences, explain how the experience or event has changed, or attest to how they experienced the event. After that, they can respond to the events they have experienced in the future by preparing written problem-solving responses that they have prepared, using other references like books or articles, in order to best prepare themselves for future opportunities and obstacles. However, none of the EFL preservice teachers reached this level.

In this case, there are several elements identified in context which encourage the majority EFL preservice teachers unable to reach the highest level of reflection, some of those occurring as follows; a) Lack of understanding of reflective learning journals; b) Difficulties getting to begin writing.

The lack of understanding of the concept of a reflective learning journal can be caused by several factors that occur in the field. The fact found is that EFL preservice teachers do not get adequate explanation or guidance on what a reflective learning journal is and how to use it. This may cause confusion and uncertainty. In addition, EFL preservice teachers do not have sufficient training in reflection skills. They are not familiar with the process of reflecting,

relating experiences to theory, or evaluating their actions. As EFL preservice teachers 14 and 6 statements: *"I have heard about reflective learning journals, but I don't really understand the concept, and it is only this semester that I am working on reflective learning journals."* (EFL preservice teacher 14). *"I knew about this reflection activity in the previous course but I didn't really understand what the concept is."* (EFL preservice teacher 6)

Therefore, it is necessary to use reflective learning journals in every lesson implemented because reflection has an important role in education. This is very relevant to Helyer (2015), Chang (2019), Nugraha et al (2020), and Suharsih and Wijayanti (2022) which state that reflective learning journals are very important for education because they can improve abilities continuously, increasing the depth of knowledge by identifying the areas that need improvement, building the quality of the learning and continuing the professional development.

Difficulty in writing is indeed a scourge that is feared by foreign language students, this is because special skills are needed to make foreign language writing by the rules of the language. The facts found in the field say that they sometimes feel difficulties in choosing and sorting out the appropriate words to compose a good sentence. In practice, some EFL preservice teachers are constrained in the selection of



vocabulary in English, so they do two times the writing, first, they write in Indonesian and then translate it into English.

Then some of the other EFL preservice teachers found it difficult to start writing. They still feel confused about where to start first. This is because they feel clumsy and blocked and need a lot of time to reflect well before they start to write. In addition, some of them were worried about the quality of their writing because they just wanted to make sure that their thoughts and analyses were deep enough and relevant. As the statements from EFL preservice teachers 1 and 7: *"Actually, I had a little difficulty in doing the reflective learning journal. When I am working on it, I sometimes find it difficult to get started. Writing a deep reflection on what I have learned is not always easy for me. I sometimes feel blocked and need time to think about how to reflect on the material properly"* (EFL preservice teacher 1). *"I often find it difficult to start writing reflections. Sometimes, I feel like there is a 'block' within me that leaves me confused about how to start and reflect on the material I have learned."* (EFL preservice teacher 7)

From the results of the data analysis, it is evident that they were not informed about reflective learning journals beforehand. This makes it difficult for them to start writing reflective learning journals correctly and structurally. This is in line with Schon cited in Pratama et al (2023) who argues that reflection in action and reflection on action

states that reflective learning journals can be a challenging task because individuals must explore a deep understanding of their experiences. Then David Boud as a developer of reflection in teaching states that effective reflection involves critical and deep thinking so this can be difficult to do, especially if someone is not familiar with the systematic reflection process (Zabidi et al, 2020).

There is a need for habituation in writing reflective learning journals to facilitate EFL preservice teachers in doing writing activities. As EFL preservice teachers who will later teach in schools, they must master one of the skills in language learning in schools, one of which is writing skills. With the habituation of writing reflective learning journals, certainly, they can certainly gradually improve their writing skills in English. This is in line with Myers' statement that a reflective learning journal is proven to be an alternative to improving writing skills (Zulfikar et al, 2018).

Therefore, there is a need for EFL preservice teachers to have extensive knowledge about reflective learning journals. There is a need for continuous habituation. Besides that, a reflective learning journal offers various advantages in it. Realizing this, EFL preservice teachers in the interview session welcomed this positively which can be proven by their statements that 88% stated that they would use and apply the reflective learning journal independently and



continuously in learning activities. This can happen because EFL preservice teachers can feel the benefits of the reflective learning journal itself.

Reflective learning journals are essential in measuring the reflective abilities of preservice English teachers in their daily learning in the classroom. As explained above, preservice teachers' EFL reflection abilities are at a medium level. However, it is important to note that this is an area that can be improved upon. It is crucial for preservice teachers to have above-average reflection skills in order to prepare them to become professional teachers. This indicates that they are able to learn from their previous experiences and continuously improve their teaching practices. By utilizing reflective learning journals, preservice teachers can learn from their past experiences. Reflective learning journals are a crucial tool for preservice teachers to improve their strengths and weaknesses. Previous research has shown that they are useful for students at school, and they can also be beneficial for preparing professional teacher candidates.

Conclusion

Reflective learning journals need to be done regularly in every lesson. By doing this habit, the learning objectives using learning experiences can be used to the fullest. Therefore, by doing reflective learning journals regularly in every lesson can increase the level of reflection in EFL

preservice teachers. Furthermore, if the level of reflection of EFL preservice teachers increases, this can also affect the quality of human resources of EFL preservice teachers who can be categorized as future professional teachers.

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