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ELT in Local and Global Lives: from Policy to Classroom Practices

Professional Teachers Preparation? Reflective Learning Journals in The Perceptions of Prospective English Teachers

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ABSTRACT

Teacher professionalism can be shaped from the education stage in college, and the use of appropriate tools is essential to prepare prospective professional teachers. This study explores prospective teachers' perceptions of reflective learning journals as a tool in the process of shaping their professionalism. With a focus on how reflective journals can assist prospective teachers in developing professional skills, understanding and attitudes, this study aims to identify the extent to which reflective learning journals are viewed as effective in supporting their preparation to become professional teachers. The findings show that prospective language teachers' perceptions of reflective learning journals are very positive. Reflective learning journals can be used as a tool to assist English language teacher candidates in preparing them to become professional teachers. This study is expected to provide insight into the benefits and acceptability of reflective learning journals in pre-service teacher education.

Keyword: reflective learning journal, professionalism, prospective English teacher

INTRODUCTION

In this era of technological advancement and globalization, the teaching profession faces increasingly complex demands and threats. In this context, it is very important for prospective English teachers to prepare as early as possible by not only relying on improving academic knowledge. More than that, by preparing themselves to develop reflective skills and professionalism. Higher education has an important role in producing quality and professional prospective teacher resources. As the highest educational institution in an educational unit, universities are responsible for equipping students with the knowledge and skills needed in the 21st century. Professionalism of prospective teachers is important because it will have a significant impact and influence on the direction of Indonesian education.

In facing these challenges, universities can prepare by designing and implementing creative and informative learning. The aim is to prepare students, especially future qualified teachers. Becoming a teacher is not very easy, they must have the required competencies. The required competencies of prospective teachers include pedagogic, professional, personality and social competencies Based on the Regulation of the Minister of National Education of the Republic of Indonesia number 16 of 2007, the competencies that must be possessed by prospective teachers who study English education in the future include 1) Knowledge of linguistic aspects in English including linguistic, discourse, sociolinguistic

and strategic; 2) Mastering the language of English orally and in writing; 3) Mastering English responsively and productively in all its communicative aspects.

The above competency standards are applied to guarantee the quality of prospective English teachers who excel as expected. In order to support the achievement of these competency indicators, an effective learning method is needed. One method that is recognized as effective in the learning process and professional development is the use of Reflective Learning Journal. Reflective Learning Journal is a systematic process to evaluate learning experiences, identify strengths and weaknesses, and can plan improvements for the future.

A reflective learning journal is a tool that English language teacher candidates can use to systematically reflect on their learning experiences, strategies and outcomes. Through this process, prospective English teachers can evaluate and reflect on their learning experiences, identify strengths and weaknesses, and design relevant improvement measures. This method not only serves to support deep learning, but also assists in the development of professional skills needed to be an effective and adaptive teacher candidate.

Reflective Learning Journals have great potential in preparing prospective English language teachers to face future learning challenges. It can be said that the reflection learning journal is a core learning activity that can be applied in higher education (Veine et al, 2019). In addition, it has the advantage of forming a professional identity (Colomer et al, 2020) , encouraging to review the learning experiences (Bassot, 2024) , and providing a very high impact that develops teacher candidates' learning (Slade et al, 2019) .

However, to what extent do prospective English teachers understand and utilize the Reflective Learning Journal in preparing themselves to become professional teachers? How do they perceive the effectiveness and benefits of reflective learning journals in the context of classroom learning? In this study, we will review the perceptions of prospective English teachers towards the use of Reflective Learning Journal. The main focus of this study is to understand how prospective teachers perceive and assess the success of this method in helping them prepare as professionals in the field of English education. By exploring their understanding, it is hoped that this research can provide valuable insights for the development of more effective English teacher training curricula and methods that are oriented towards improving the quality of education.

METHOD

This research belongs to quantitative study. Quantitative methodology is the dominant research framework in the social sciences. It refers to a set of strategies, techniques and assumptions used to study psychological, social and economic processes through the exploration of numeric patterns (Ahmad et al, 2019). Quantitative research gathers a range of numeric data. This research was conducted on students in class A 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. Focus In this study, researchers wanted to find out the students perceive whether Reflective learning journals as a tool that could prepare professionalism. The primary data in this study is obtained using a questionnaire. The form of questions in this questionnaire is designed in the form of closed questions. Based on Walgito (2010) which states that there are 3 components in perception including:

- Cognitive

This cognitive component is a perceptual component related to knowledge, opinions, beliefs and good things about how an individual perceives an object.

- Affective

This component relates to the attitude of feelings of pleasure or displeasure, likes or dislikes of an individual towards the attitude object. These feelings can be divided into two, namely positive feelings and negative feelings and can highlight direct behavior.

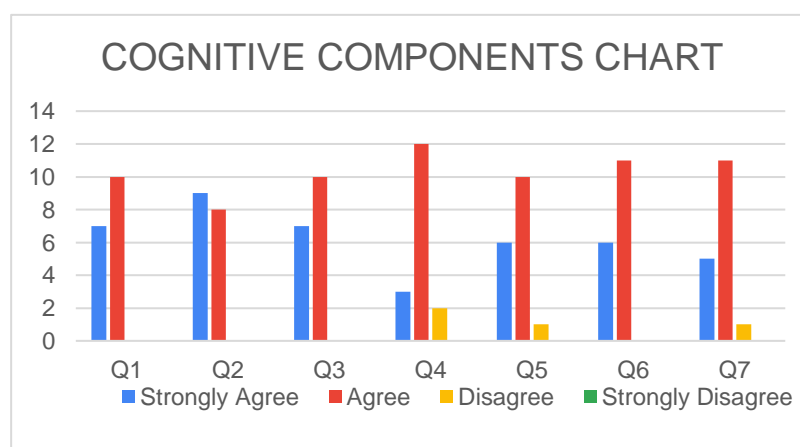
- Conative

The conative component is a component related to the tendency of action towards an object. This component shows the intensity of behavior which shows the tendency of the size of the action depending on the behavior of the object.

RESULT

The researcher used 17 statements to find out the answer to the second research question. To measure the perception, the researcher used a Likert scale with categories of strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree. The form of data used is based on 3 aspects of perception, namely cognitive, affective, and conative (Walgito, 2010). The cognitive component clarifies the experiences, expectations, and methods in the learning of Prospective English teachers.

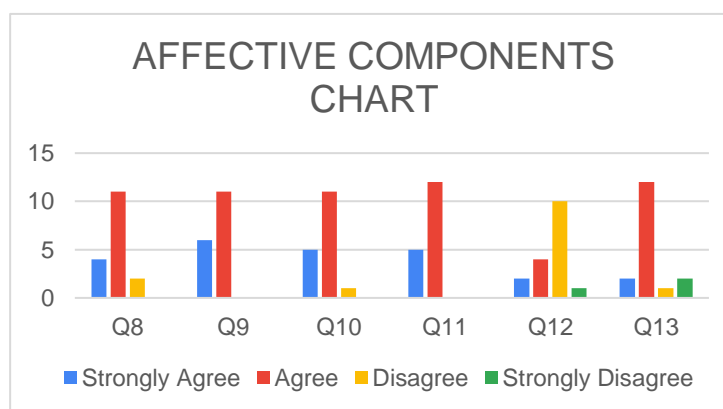
Picture 1. Scales of Cognitive Components



In the cognitive component on picture 1, there are 7 statements, including That Prospective English teachers need to be professional, Prospective English teachers must have a professional attitude, A tool or approach (method) is needed to prepare professional Prospective English teachers, I know Reflective Learning Journals before, Reflective Learning Journal helped me become a professional EFL Preservice Teacher, Because of the Reflective Learning Journal I can find out my strengths and weaknesses in learning and Reflective Learning Journal helps me in dealing with learning difficulties.

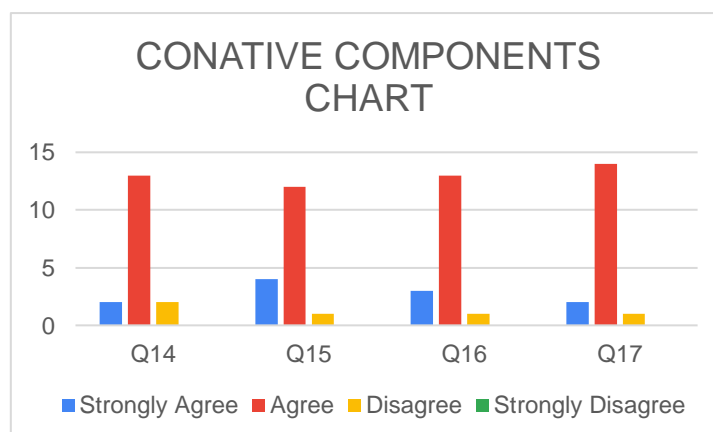
The second component in finding out the perception of Prospective English teachers towards reflective learning journals by Walgito (2010) is the affective component. The finding for each of its aspects can be explained in Picture 2 below:

Picture 2. Scale of Affective Component



The next component category from Walgito (2010) in exploring prospective English teachers' perceptions related to reflective learning journals is the conative component. The indicators contained in this component focus on Prospective English teachers' ideas, motivation, and time (activities). It can be described from all statements from Q14 to Q17. This can be explained in Picture 3 below:

Picture 3. Scale of Conative Components



From the finding data above, it can be interpreted as follows:

Table 1. Number of Value

Number of items	: 17
Likert Scale	: 1-4
Category	: 3 (High, Average, Low)
High Score	: 68
Low Score	:17
Range of Value	
Low	: 17 – 33
Average	: 34 – 50
High	: 51 - 68

Table 2. Description of Prospective English Teachers Perception Statistic of Reflective Learning Journal

Indicators	Mean	Standard Deviation
Cognitive	57	2
Affetive	52	6
Conative	53	1

DISCUSSION

The information from the table 1 above states that from each indicator it can be found that the response of prospective English teachers show a very positive response. The highest score is at point 68 of all indicators and occupies an average that is almost close to the highest point. Cognitive indicator on Prospective English teachers occupies an average point of 57 (table 2) from the highest point of 68 (table 1). This shows that the level of perception on knowledge, opinions, beliefs and good things about reflective learning journal gets a very positive response. on cognitive indicator shows that the average Prospective English teachers have a good level of knowledge about reflective learning journal. In addition, they considered that reflective learning journal can improve their ability to think critically and reflectively.

Prospective English teachers have positive beliefs, because they believe that reflective learning journal helps them recognize their strengths and weaknesses in the teaching and learning process. This belief reflects the increased level of confidence of the Prospective English teachers, so that they can manage and navigate the learning process very well. Prospective English teachers felt that the reflective learning journal process provided them with opportunities for significant personal and academic growth. This in line with the various studies conducted by Lubis (2018), Muizzudin (2019), Widodo et al (2020), Rinto et al (2021), and Munawir et al (2022) suggesting that professional teachers are those who have

good pedagogic competence, always develop themselves, are able to design various models of learning methods, are able to implement active, innovative effective, fun learning and can become facilitators of their students.

The average point of 52 (table 2) is shown on the affective indicator. Indicators related to feelings of pleasure or displeasure, like or dislike for an object are in a positive assessment. It can be described that prospective English teachers have a reflection in their view that the reflection process carried out through journaling helps them in planning more effective lessons, improving interactions with students, and handling challenges in the classroom better. Then they noted that reflective journal learning provided many benefits, including improved reflective skills, better stress management, and improved writing skills.

In addition, they felt that reflective learning journals helped them to better connect with their professional goals and facilitated personal and professional growth. This is in line with several research studies as stated by Wu et al (2019) , Valente et al (2020) , Li et al (2021) and Xing (2022) suggested that Emotional intelligence should be provided by the teachers because it can create a conducive classroom atmosphere and minimise classroom conflict so that the class is not chaotic.

Indicator Conative occupies an average value of 53 (table 2) from the highest value. This shows the intensity of behavior that shows the size of the action that depends on the object. The indicators contained in this component focus on Prospective English teachers' ideas, motivation, and time (activities). They believe that keeping reflective learning journals independently and continuously requires commitment and discipline. Feeling able to do something in the future is considered an indicator of psychological empowerment (Ramos Vidal et al, 2020) (Kim et al, 2019), (Alnajjar, 2022).

However, it can provide significant benefits in self-development and progress as a preservice teacher. The more they reflect and evaluate their experiences, the better they will become in their understanding and teaching skills. They have an idea that their learning life to be more directed and measurable. Although the process is quite time-consuming at the end of the learning session, the spirit of the Prospective English teachers is very enthusiastic about doing reflective learning journals.

The results showed that perceptions of the reflective learning journal were very positive in all aspects studied. Prospective English teachers demonstrated good knowledge of the journal's benefits, gave favorable opinions, had high confidence in its effectiveness, and identified various positive benefits from its use. This suggests that the reflective learning journal is a very effective tool in improving the quality of learning and personal reflection. In addition, the in-depth knowledge, favorable opinions, strong beliefs, and identification of positive benefits prove that the reflective learning journal is a valuable tool in improving the quality of learning and personal reflection.

This finding supports the use of reflective learning journal as an effective method to facilitate deeper and more meaningful learning process. Overall, the results of this study indicate that prospective English language teachers have a very positive perception of reflective learning journals. They

understand and appreciate the benefits of using reflective journals in educational contexts, show a strong belief in its effectiveness, and identify the various positive benefits it offers.

CONCLUSION

This study has explored EFL pre-service teachers' perceptions of reflective learning journals as a tool to prepare them to become professional EFL teachers. Furthermore, the findings and discussion on EFL pre-service teachers' perceptions of reflective learning journals that can be used as a tool to prepare them to become professional teachers. The response of the EFL pre-service teachers in this regard reacted very positively. These perceptions confirmed that reflective learning journals are an invaluable tool for pre-service English teachers, not only in improving the quality of their teaching but also in supporting their professional and personal growth.

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