

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter is divided into two major parts, discussing theoretical and previous studies. Theoretical studies comprise related theorists in this study, while previous studies discuss the implementation of that related theorist in prior studies.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

2.1.1 Reflective Journal for EFL Teacher

A researcher has provided a straightforward definition of a reflective journal. Teachers can "...put their thoughts, ideas, feelings, and reflections..." on papers and books using a reflective journal (Göker, 2016, p. 187). A reflective journal can help teachers save their ideas for solving problems so that they can re-read them when they realize something is wrong with their practices or need to improve something. In addition, it may assist them in recalling what they did in their classroom and determining whether they should alter their teaching materials or methods. As a result, reflecting on the reflective journal will help them develop their practice.

The term "reflective journal" was defined differently by another researcher. According to Jado (2015, p. 89) a reflective journal is a systematic way of documenting learning and gathering information for self-analysis and reflection. Teachers can use pictures and notes to document learning by capturing what happens during their practices. After that, putting together their reflective journal from all the documentation can yield useful information. As a result, keeping a

reflective journal will provide them with the information they need to evaluate various options and choose the best one for themselves.

2.1.2 Dimension of Reflective Journal

The reflective journal dimension is an important aspect that must be considered when implementing reflective journals in the learning process. The first dimension is the time dimension (Moon, 2019). In this dimension, reflective journals provide special time for students to reflect on their experiences, understandings, and learning. By taking regular time to write journals, students can reflect on and analyze their learning process, strengthen their understanding, and identify and correct weaknesses or errors in their understanding.

The second dimension of the reflective journal is the content dimension (Johns, 2017). In this dimension, students are expected to record in detail their experiences, thoughts and reflections related to the subject matter being studied. The contents of a reflective journal must include students' understanding of concepts, questions or problems that arise, as well as personal thoughts and new discoveries they make. By recording all of this in a journal, students can see how their thinking has developed and changed over time, and gain deeper insight into their own understanding.

The third dimension of the reflective journal is the interaction dimension (Moon, 2019). In this dimension, reflective journals become a communication tool between students and teachers. The teacher has an important role in reading and providing feedback on journals written by students. This interaction allows the teacher to understand student understanding, identify difficulties faced by students,

and provide guidance or correction if needed. In addition, students can also share their journals with classmates or in discussion groups, expanding the dimension of interaction and enabling the exchange of ideas and thoughts between students.

By paying attention to the dimensions of time, content, and interaction in reflective journals, reflective journals can be an effective tool for increasing student understanding, strengthening critical thinking skills, and facilitating deeper learning (Moon, 2019). These dimensions work together to create a reflective environment that allows students to reflect on and assess their learning experiences, and to refine and develop their own understanding. Thus, the reflective journal becomes a valuable instrument in improving the quality of student learning and their personal development (Johns, 2017).

2.1.3 Benefits of Reflective Journal

2.1.3.1 Increasing Self-Awareness

A teacher's perspective and practice can be enhanced by becoming aware of their teaching beliefs and practices. With awareness of their teaching, teachers can determine their strengths and areas for improvement (Ashley & Reiter-Palmon, 2012). Several studies have examined how teachers' self-awareness can be improved by doing reflective tasks like writing in a journal. Francis (2010) found that pre-service teachers who kept journals in a Bachelor of Education program helped ask themselves questions about being teacher-learners. Similarly, a study conducted by Jung (2012) on physical education in-service teachers demonstrated that reflection allowed them to self-evaluate, identify areas in which they needed to improve their teaching practice and alter their preexisting teaching beliefs. Borg

(2011) found that through reflective journal writing, the EFL teachers became aware of their beliefs about language teaching and learning, enabling them to examine and refine their pedagogical approaches.

Teachers can gain valuable insights into their teaching beliefs and practices by engaging in reflective practices such as journal writing. This heightened self-awareness can significantly contribute to their professional development and instructional effectiveness. Several studies have investigated the impact of reflective tasks, such as journaling, on teachers' self-awareness (El Miedany, 2019).

2.1.3.2 Increasing One's Own Comprehension

Writing in a reflective journal has been extensively studied and found to yield various positive effects on both pre-service and in-service teachers. The literature highlights several ways in which reflective journaling enhances teachers' understanding of and thinking about teaching.

Firstly, Degago (2017) emphasizes that reflective journaling deepens teachers' comprehension of the intricate complexities involved in the teaching profession. Through introspection and self-exploration, educators can gain valuable insights into the multifaceted aspects of their role, including classroom dynamics, student needs, and instructional strategies.

Secondly, Dymont and O'Connell (2010) suggests that reflective journaling serves as a powerful tool for clarifying teachers' thoughts and reflections. By putting their thoughts into written form, educators can organize their ideas and articulate their feelings more effectively, leading to a greater understanding of their teaching practices and potential areas of improvement.

Thirdly, reflective journaling bridges the gap between theoretical concepts and practical application in the classroom (Goldberg, 2012). Teachers can connect their academic knowledge with real-world teaching experiences, allowing them to apply theory to practice more cohesively and effectively.

Furthermore, engaging in reflective journaling empowers teachers to explore innovative and non-conventional teaching methods (Degago, 2017). By documenting their teaching experiences and observations, educators can identify areas for growth and experiment with new pedagogical approaches that align better with their students' needs and learning styles.

In addition, writing in a reflective journal can also assist teachers in developing creativity and innovation in their teaching approaches. By reflecting on teaching experiences and student learning outcomes, teachers can find new, more effective ways to facilitate student understanding and learning. Therefore, a reflective journal can enrich their teaching practice and enhance the quality of the student learning experience (Bell, Mladenovic, & Segara, 2010)

In addition, from reading journal entries, Lew and Schmidt (2011), highlight the potential for instructors to use self-reflective journal entries to evaluate students' understanding of course material and identify areas for further instruction, as well as to encourage critical reflection through structured writing prompts. Finally, by using assigned journal writing topics, instructors can guide and focus their students' learning, emphasize important lecture concepts, and challenge students to employ critical thinking skills.

Thus, writing in a reflective journal has far-reaching implications for teachers' understanding and teaching practice, allowing them to gain deeper insight

into the complexities of teaching, clarify their thinking, link theory to practice, and foster creativity and innovation in teaching approaches (Bruster & Peterson, 2013).

2.1.3.3 Interaction Between Students and Teachers

There are various benefits to student-teacher dialogue with teacher educators, including teacher-educator feedback on students' reflective journals. According to Fischl and Sayag (2012), teacher educators' feedback in journals, including compliments, questions, opinions, and suggestions, contributed to higher reflection rates. Clarà (2015) suggests that specific feedback from teacher educators can promote more reflective writing among student teachers. Lee (2017, p.36) found that pre-service teachers "appreciated the advice of teacher educators, he answers to their questions, and the support he showed" in a variety of perceptions.

When students engage in journal writing as part of their coursework, the benefits extend beyond the students themselves and have a positive impact on their instructors. Instructors who incorporate journal assignments into their teaching approach often observe an uptick in student engagement and participation. Requiring students to respond to class material through writing serves as a motivational tool, compelling students to diligently complete their readings and actively contribute to class discussions. This heightened level of participation not only enriches the overall learning experience but also facilitates more dynamic and interactive classroom dynamics (Cooper & Stevens, 2009).

2.1.3.4 Acquiring New Skills through New Experiences

Teachers of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students can gain a fresh perspective on their students' learning by writing reflective journals. According to Hashemi and Mirzaei (2015), reflective journal writing provides them with an introduction to reflection and the opportunity to utilize background information pertinent to the learning experiences they have had individually. They have good chances to learn about themselves and develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills as an important part of skills for the 21st century because their academic courses include reflective journals.

Journal writing serves as a versatile tool for students, offering them the opportunity to reflect on newly acquired knowledge from their classroom experiences. As they progress through their courses, learn additional material, and formulate fresh conclusions, this practice enables them to solidify their understanding by documenting their evolving thought processes. Furthermore, journaling empowers students to develop and articulate new opinions perspectives , providing them with a safe and supportive platform to explore , think critically and hone the skills they have acquired in the classroom (Hashemi & Mirzaei,2015).

This transformative potential of journaling is substantiated by research conducted by Cooper and Stevens (2009). Consistent journaling not only enhances students' writing abilities but also cultivates their capacity for creative and reflective thinking, making it a valuable pedagogical tool that contributes to holistic academic growth.

2.1.4 Disadvantages of Reflective Journal

Reflection activities are usually carried out at the end of the lesson in discussion and question-and-answer sessions. However, very few students are honest about what they do not understand and feel uncomfortable asking questions in front of their friends (Hidayat, Kurniawati, & Purnamasari, 2021). So, reflection can be hampered, and even their misunderstanding can be ignored. Atmowardoyo, Baharuddin, and Nur (2020), in their analysis also explains that there are several problems in reflective implementation in the classroom, including the factor that teachers are required to have adequate experience in reflective so that the implementation can run smoothly because teachers can understand what can be done when evaluating their reflective journals.

A reflective journal is a useful tool for reflecting and recording personal experiences, but it also has some drawbacks. One of the main drawbacks of reflective journals is their tendency to be subjective and overly influenced by emotions and moods when writing. When someone writes in a high emotional state, they may see a problem or situation from only one point of view without involving a wider or objective perspective (Lew & Schmidt, 2011).

In addition, reflective journals can also become repetitive and form a limited mindset. A person may repeat the same thoughts or experiences without delving deeper or looking for more creative solutions. This can hinder individuals' personal growth and development, as they get stuck in the same cycle without taking concrete action steps to break free from repetitive patterns and explore new possibilities (Apriyanti & Rahmat, 2021).

Another drawback of reflective journaling is the lack of accountability. Because these journals are usually personal records, there can be no guarantee that an individual will be held accountable for any necessary actions or changes after reflecting on the experience. Sometimes, a reflective journal only serves as a place to express emotions or complain without taking any real action to overcome the problem (de Rooij, Jone, & Rivera, 2020).

Furthermore, reflective journals can also serve as a source of regret. When a person excessively dwells on past mistakes or failures, the journal can reinforce negative emotions and impede their progress. In some cases, reflective journaling can become a means for someone to remain fixated on the past, hindering their ability to move forward and focus on the future (Jado, 2015). All of this highlights the importance of maintaining a balanced approach when using reflective journals to prevent them from becoming counterproductive to personal development.

In the face of these drawbacks, it is important to take a balanced approach to reflective journaling. One must remain objective and open to various perspectives and ensure that the journal is not only a place to complain but also to find solutions and act according to the reflections (de Rooij, Jone & Rivera, 2020).

2.1.5 Strategy and the Process of Reflective Journal

Writing is one of the most efficient methods for reflecting on experience, as Finkle (2000) argues in Watson (2011) that the efficiency gained from writing reflective journals allows writers or students to record experiences, reflect on experiences to achieve analytical goals, and review them by sharing. As writing is a means of conveying ideas to others, it plays a crucial role in effective

communication and knowledge sharing (Sukino, 2010). Additionally, written communication allows information to be documented and preserved for future reference, enabling the dissemination of knowledge beyond immediate interactions.

Experience and reflection are closely linked (Siregar & Hara, 2010), Piaget (2000) argued that knowledge is a human creation built from experience, that the formation process never stops, and that there is reconstruction every time there is a new understanding. According to Piaget's theory (2000) in Siregar and Hara (2010), regarding cognitive development, individuals actively construct their understanding of the world through interactions with their environment, and this process of construction and reconstruction continues throughout life as new information and experiences are assimilated and accommodated into existing mental schemas.

One of the criteria referred to is that students' reflection is a sense-making process in which they connect information to their past experiences and other ideas. Rodgers (2020) identified four stages in the reflection process, beginning with Dewey (2004) in English (2013) definition of reflection: Experience's presence: acquiring a keen eye, an account of the experience: Learning to differentiate and describe, experience analysis: developing critical thinking and theory-making skills and experimentation: acquiring the ability to make sound decisions.

The identification results of Rodgers (2020), are consistent with Kolb (2014) model, which is based on Jungian psychology and consists of four phases: Individuals gain concrete direct experience, then he develops his observations and thinks about or reflects on them, from that, generalizations and abstractions are formed, and the implications he draws from these concepts guide him in dealing with new experiences.

Reflection does not just happen even when the time is set aside it needs to be fostered and developed using a variety of different supporting techniques. Reflection is the core to all development in teacher education and it should be seen as a means of developing an overarching competence for teaching, one that links all the others. Three stages of reflection. Beginning with students recognizing their unease or lack of understanding when explaining something. The second stage of reflection calls for a critical analysis of a concept, circumstance, event, or knowledge requirement that considers one's prior knowledge and the potential application of new information. The new perspective that emerges as a result of analysis or applying new information is the final stage (Dennis & Gelfuso, 2014).

2.1.6 Critical Thinking and Reflective Journal

Critical thinking was defined by Bassham and Holsblat (2012) as the intellectually disciplined process of actively and skillfully conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and evaluating information to reach an answer or conclusion. Elder and Paul (2020) talked about weak sense critical thinking, which includes things like argument analysis, synthesis, and evaluation, and strong sense critical thinking, which includes an ethical sense of fairness to fight egocentrism. Elder and Paul (2020) did not provide a specific definition of critical thinking in his work. However, his exploration of critical thinking aligns with various established approaches, including the scientific postulation, experimental, taxonomic, historical derivation, and probabilistic methods. These diverse approaches have played pivotal roles in shaping the evolution and foundation of modern rational thought.

In examining Elder and Paul's work (2020), it becomes evident that critical thinking encompasses a broad spectrum of perspectives and methodologies. By drawing on the scientific postulation, experimental inquiry, taxonomic analysis, historical context, and probabilistic reasoning, Elder and Paul's (2020) conceptualization of critical thinking underscores its interdisciplinary nature and its relevance across various fields. This comprehensive view underscores the importance of a multifaceted approach in fostering and advancing critical thinking skills in contemporary education and problem-solving contexts.

Dewey (2004) in English (2013), a well-known education philosopher, was the first to advocate the significance of reflection in learning. He argued that learning does not always come from experience alone. Since then, reflection has grown in significance, especially in higher education.

Additionally, learning journals are frequently utilized in professional academic courses, such as teaching (Francis, 2010). The use of reflective journaling in nursing curricula allows students to critically examine their clinical experiences, fostering self-awareness and professional growth (Brown & Langley, 2010). The application of learning journals is discussed in the context of management, highlighting their benefits in skill development and problem-solving for professionals in this field (Bain, Ballantyne, Mills, & Packer, 2010). Lew and Schmidt (2011) explore the adaptability of learning journals across disciplines, including management, and their potential to address changes in professional environments. Thorpe (2017) offer additional insights, providing more specific information about the utilization of learning journals in various disciplines, and referencing a particular page from their cited work.

2.1.7 Previous Studies

In terms of the efficiency of reflective journals, several researchers have observed the advantages of reflective journals. Al-Jaro and Asmawi (2018) in his research which focuses on the reflective practice experience of an EFL student teacher during practicum, the results of his research revealed that student teachers could independently reflect on their teaching practices when they examine the problems they face, consult and collaborate, and find suggestions for better teaching. This result is consistent with the findings of Draissi, BaoHui, and Zhan (2021), which also support the notion that self-reflection is an effective strategy to improve and foster teacher-reflective practice.

Regarding the usefulness of reflective journaling for teachers, Everett (2013) proved that all novice teachers reported that they believed that reflective exercise was a useful skill, and all experienced teachers said that they would use reflective exercise even though it was not a mandatory exercise. The findings document how journaling in a first-year seminar can be used to support institutional action to improve the quality of the undergraduate experience and student success.

Meanwhile, reflective journals also have a good impact on teachers, the learning process, and student development. Further, Niswatussolihah (2017) proves that her research on the effect of reflective journal writing strategies and students' mathematical critical thinking shows students' thinking skills. The mathematical criticality of students taught with the reflective journal writing strategy was higher than those taught with the expository strategy. It showed that the mathematical creative thinking skills of the students taught with the reflective journal writing strategy were higher. In addition to students taught using expository strategies, it

shows that writing reflective journals positively affects students' critical thinking skills and creative mathematical thinking. Similarities between this study and other studies show that reflective journaling benefits teachers and students. However, there are differences between this study and other studies where some researchers only focus on benefits for teachers in the classroom, while this study focused on students.

This finding is also in line with study by Sunra, Sahril, and Farahdiba (2021) study, which they conducted on teachers of EFL students to assess writing skills through reflective journals. Their research shows that the writing skills of EFL teacher students are in a good category based on their reflective journal evaluation. Among the five components of the writing rubric, EFL teacher students performed best in mechanics and worst in vocabulary. Even so, they still need to practice more writing and improve their skills performance in terms of vocabulary mastery and development.

The equation that leads out is that all studies show the positive benefits of using reflective journaling in enhancing comprehension, critical thinking and creativity in students and teachers. Al-Jaro and Asmawi (2018), Draissi, BaoHui, and Zhan (2021), and Niswatussoliha (2017), found that self-reflection through a reflection diary had a significant impact on improving the quality of education and fostering student growth. Additionally, their research indicates that the implementation of reflective journaling not only enhances academic performance but also cultivates a sense of self-awareness and metacognitive skills among learners, empowering them to take ownership of their learning journey.

However, there are differences in the direction of these studies. Kim's (2018) survey focused on pre-service teachers' reflective journal writing on practicum: focus of reflection and perception, the results also revealed that journaling writing had positive potentials: promoting reflective practice, further conceptualizing own views on the application of knowledge, and improving the English language skills. On the other hand, a study by Niswatussolihah (2017) focused more on the impact of reflective journaling strategies on students' mathematical, critical and creative thinking skills. This difference indicates that reflective journaling can benefit teachers and students in different learning situations

In addition, study by Sunra, Sahril, and Farahdiba (2021) study sheds light on her EFL student-teacher writing skills through reflection journals. Studies have shown that EFL student-teachers have good writing skills but vocabulary acquisition and development deficiencies. Research indicates that reflective journaling can provide feedback that helps improve writing skills, but improving certain aspects, such as vocabulary acquisition, still requires practice and effort.

Despite the differences in research focus, the general conclusions that can be drawn are that the use of reflective journaling is associated with improved teaching practices for teachers and improved comprehension and critical and creative thinking for students, that means it will bring great benefits in skill development. A retrospective journal can also give students helpful feedback on improving their writing skills.