



INVESTIGATING SELF-ASSESSMENT AS A PLATFORM OF STUDENT-TEACHER'S REFLECTION IN EFL TEACHING PRACTICE

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ABSTRACT

This reflective practice study aims to investigate how self-assessment as a platform for self-reflection functions to promote student teacher's professional development. This study involves the researcher herself as a student teacher who completed a teaching practice in a senior high school in Indonesia. To collect the necessary data, this study uses self-assessment, which consists of nine points of self-reflection, including (1) Organization, rules, and procedures; (2) Preparing students for new learning; (3) Positive relationship; (4) Deeping Learning; (5) Presenting new learning; (6) Helping students reflect on and celebrate learning; (7) Culture of thinking and learning; (8) Applying learning; (9) Engagement and Enjoyment. Then, the collected data are analyzed by using thematic analysis. The results showed that there are two main functions of self-assessment in a student teacher's professional development, which are (1) to improve classroom management skill, and (2) to improve teaching strategy. To sum up, reflection by using self-assessment, which consists of nine assessed points related to the student teacher's classroom teaching practices, can facilitate reflection on many things related to the teaching and learning process, which in turn can help the student teacher to improve her professional development.

Keywords : Reflection, Self-assessment, Teaching practice , Teacher's professional development

INTRODUCTION

To make teaching and learning process become more effective, teachers need to reflect on their own teaching to figure out their strengths and weaknesses, which in turn can contribute to their self-development. In this regards, self-assessment is considered as a beneficial technique for self-improvement (Ross & Bruce, 2007) Self-assessment can be interpreted as a process of self-examination using several sequential feedback strategies with the aim of instructional self-improvement (Bailey, 1981). In addition, besides serves as an assessment for the teachers, self-assessment is also a learning tool that can be used to learn from their own teaching practice, enhance their understanding of the good teaching criteria, as well as strengthen their reflection (Cheung,2009). The teachers' need for self-assessment is also related to the need for maintaining professionalism and accountability with the teaching profession (Allen & Chaerles, 2017). Similarly in teaching practice, student-teachers need self-

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assessment to reduce deficiencies or challenges in the classroom. In this regards, some of the challenges may give negative impacts on their performance. For instance, when student-teachers over think about their assessment results given by their fellow or from their supervisor, which can lead to poor teaching practices and negative evaluations. Seeing this phenomenon, student-teachers' assessment can be conducted by themselves through looking at several aspects contained in self-assessment to reflect their performance in conducting teaching practices.

In teaching, obviously, teachers need reflection to find out to which extent effective learning is carried out and what things need to be improved. Reflection itself is at the core of the experiential learning model, which offers a holistic integrated perspective on learning by combining experience, perception, cognition and behavior (Kolb, 1984). In this regard, teachers can assess their teaching performance by conducting reflection. Through reflection there are many aspects and levels of one's teaching practices that can be assessed by reflection, including specific classroom practices, behaviors, incidents, and assignments; learning goals and outcomes; and discrepancies between the instructor's beliefs and values (Brookfield 1995; Farrell 2008; Larrivee 2008). In this case self-assessment can be done through analyzing journal writing in order to reflect teaching performance. Nilsen & Ellström (2012) describe reflection as a mechanism to translate experience into learning, by examining one's attitudes, beliefs and actions, and to draw conclusions to enable better choices or responses in the future. So, in the context of teaching and learning, reflection can be utilized as a tool for teachers or learners to internalize their teaching learning process through self-assessment which is included in journal writing.

The need for teacher self-assessment is also tied to the need to maintain professionalism and accountability to the profession of teaching (Allen & Chaerles, 2017). Furthermore, Allen & Chaerles (2017) also that self-assessment can help teachers to know how they are reaching students in the affective and cognitive domain. Thus, self-assessment allows conversation to come internally from teacher and students that makes teachers more aware of students' needs in learning. Panandero & Tapia (2013) state that self-assessment is a qualitative assessment. This expression implies that self- assessment is not a mere quantitative assessment or "give a score to one-self." In short, the qualitative study in this research does not focus on the score, but on the process which enables the student-teachers to learn from their mistakes and success of their performance in the class.

Research shows that self-assessment has several benefits for student-teachers to raise their consciousness about self-development potential. First, self-assessment is used to improve teaching and it is considered as a powerful technique for self-improvement (Ross & Bruce, 2007 cited in Freiberg & Snead, 2017). Second, since the 1980s, self-assessment is seen as a means to empower teachers, to allow them to take charge of their own improvement (Hoover & Carroll, 1987). Third, self-assessment allows the educator to take an in-depth look at the culture and climate of the classroom (Allen & Chaerles, 2017). As a conclusion, it can offer several benefits, such as providing tools for changing and modifying student-teacher's professionalism, encouraging meaningful teaching, and helping them to raise their own development.

This study is carried out during the teaching practice program. Teaching practice itself is known as a program to expose student-teachers to the real teaching practice (Abongdia, Adu & Foncha, 2015). During the practice period, student-teachers are given the opportunity to apply and try their current knowledge and skill of teaching based on their belief before facing the real world of the teaching profession. Thus, Abongdia, Adu & Foncha (2015) state that

teaching practice provides student-teachers with the chance to express their personal educational values, theories and understanding. It also creates an opportunity for them to reflect on their knowledge and skills. Thus in the future it can support their professional development of teaching. In facing a rapid development of education, teachers are required to update their knowledge and skills to improve their professionalism (Richards & Farrell, 2005). They point out that teachers need to be able to take part in activities that can help their professionalism betterment such as engaging in self-reflection and assessment, developing teaching skills and knowledge, research involvement in teaching, awareness about their roles and responsibilities, and developing relationships with other teachers. Related to those statements, student-teachers need to deal with the real context of teaching experience in order to examine their current level of teaching to help them promote their professionalism as a teacher. Thus, the key to the professional development is to emphasize the link between practice and student achievement by stimulating reflective practice and teaching (Presadă & Badea, 2018). So, it is important for student-teachers to maintain and arrange a better teaching-learning activity where the class can run effectively, through reflecting the real teaching experience. It can be said that teaching practice is an important key to access the door of professionalism by which the student-teachers can be considered as a teacher.

There are many studies about reflective practice in supporting self-development, for example a research conducted by Freiberg & Snead (2017), Allen & Chaerles (2017), and Purcell (2013). Yet, most of the studies only focus on the student's development, and less studies concern about the student-teacher's development. Then, in order to fill this gap, this study will investigate how self-assessment can promote student-teacher's reflection. Afterwards, in exploring this case, the study aims to find out how the student-teachers can reflect through self-assessment in enhancing their self-development for the betterment of their teaching practice in the future.

METHOD

A reflective practice was chosen as the research design for this present study. In general, reflective practice is an essential way to learn from one's experiences, which serve as the starting point by using reflective processes to understand them differently, which results to take some appropriate action regarding to those experiences (Jasper, 2003). Furthermore, it is also a carefully thought out and well-defined practice that conveys very specific meaning and related action (Loughran, 2002). In relation to this present study, by using it, teachers are able to increase their teaching performance consciously and systematically to reflect on their teaching practices (Farrell 2007 as cited in Farrell, 2008). In addition, reflective practice is used as the process to understand the way how student-teachers reflect their own beliefs, assumptions, and values about the teaching and learning process (Farrell, 2013). This approach will be used to support the research related to phenomenon of student-teacher in developing self-awareness and self-professionalism through self-assessment. This research was conducted in the seventh grade of a secondary school located in Tasikmalaya, West Java, Indonesia, where the researcher practiced her teaching practice. This will provide an easy access for the researcher to collect the data. This school is accredited A and is located in suburb of Tasikmalaya which makes students in this school have average achievement. The participant of this research is the researcher herself, because in this study she was the student-teacher who has joined the teaching practice program for two months, at which during

the teaching practice she used self-assessment as a tool to reflect her performance in the class. The data are collected from self-assessment documents, which were written once in a week for a month, after she conducted teaching and learning process in two classes. These documents consists of nine questions which are used to find out the student-teacher's reflection after performing in the class. Then, the collected data were qualitatively analyzed through thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

After analyzing the self-assessment document using thematic analysis, two emergent themes are finally identified that could answer the research question about how self-assessment supports student-teacher's reflection in EFL teaching practice, the themes found are: (1) Promoting Classroom Management and (2) Improving Teaching Strategies. They are displayed in the form of excerpt gained from student-teacher's reflection through self-assessment document, which is interpreted and elaborated with theories. Then, the excerpts are displayed to support the findings (all of the excerpts are translated from Bahasa Indonesia into English in the italic form).

Promoting Classroom Management

Classroom management is defined by Bilingsley, McKenzie & Scheurman (2018) as the foundation for creating an effective teaching. It means by constructing an effective classroom management, the process to reach the learning goal could be easier. The effectiveness of classroom management could be built from a positive learning environment through the combination of preventative classroom management components, support for positive behaviors, and effective consequences for unacceptable behavior (Bilingsley, McKenzie & Scheurman, 2018). However, many student teacher often find it to be very challenging to handle their own classrooms (Regawanti, 2015). They should be able to manage the classroom effectively, so that the problems which often occur in the class can be minimalized and even prevented.

Finding of this study showed that the classroom management is mostly about students' behavior related to their discipline. This statement is related to the National Council on Teacher Quality (2014) that teachers consistently identify classroom management as a "top problem" and that 40% of new teachers do not feel adequately prepared to handle the low discipline that can occur in the classroom. In this study, the low discipline included disturbance made by students, which often happened around the learning time. As the researcher experienced in the teaching learning process, she felt so bothered by disturbance made by some students, which made her and others students not able to focus well during the learning process. The following data showed an evidence of how they disturbed her in learning process.

Excerpt 1

"2 students came late to the class, they made me felt annoyed, because it hindered the teaching-learning and interfered with concentration" (Transcribed from self-assessment data Q1: September 11, 2019, Author's Translation)

Based on the excerpt 1, she was annoyed and felt disturbed by two students who were late entering the class, so did the other students felt the same too. It can be seen from their concentration when she asked them about the materials, since they haltingly answered and forgot about the point being discussed earlier. Meanwhile, previously they could answer correctly. Then, when she finished teaching and met other student-teachers, she asked them whether or not there were students who often came late to the class. Surprisingly, this case often happens in other class too. The lateness of students usually occurs during lesson after break time, because she heard from other teachers that students often leave the school complex during break time, resulting in students being late to class. Therefore, she initiated to make some rules for the next meeting, so students could be more discipline in their learning. Then, they did not disturb others during learning activities. Reflection of learning activities that she did in the next meeting can be seen in excerpt 2.

Excerpt 2

Considering about what happened yesterday in 7B class, before the class got started, I enforced rules for all of the students regarding time. Students were allowed to join class 10 minutes after the class started, and if they come more than 10 minutes, they had to ask for a permission letter for joining class from other teacher in the office. (Transcribed from self-assessment data Q1: September 12, 2019, Author's Translation)

"In the beginning of learning activity, I gave some information about rules in the classroom during teaching learning process. There were: 1. Do not come late more than 10 minutes. If they came more than 10 minutes after the class began, they had to ask for joining class from other teacher in the office, 2. Do not eat in the classroom, and 3. Do not get out from the class during teaching learning process". (Transcribed from self-assessment data Q1: October 2, 2019, Author's Translation)

Based on the excerpt 2, she realized that she managed the students' discipline to overcome the distraction in teaching learning process. For example, she generated rules for teaching and learning process in several days after the incident happened in her class. One of the rules is a prohibition to come late more than 10 minutes related to the students' punctuality. As a result, students' habit in a good manner occurred in the next meeting after she generated this rule in the class.

Excerpt 3

"I am very happy because after I implemented some rules last week, there are no more students who are late entering to the class. It shows from students who obey the rules that I make and become more discipline about timing to learning activities". (Transcribed from self-assessment data Q1: October 9, 2019, Author's Translation)

Based on excerpt 3, she was happy because when she had implemented some rules in class regarding discipline, no more students were late entering the class at the next meeting. It shows that they were able to be more discipline. Basically, most of students were very disinclined to ask for a permission letter to the teachers' office, because they were ashamed to meet many teachers in the office. As a result, students really obeyed the rules that she made during learning activities. According to Virtudazo & Guhao (2020) it is important to have basic rules for students to follow, it helps maintain classroom management and discipline.

Sadik (2017) also stated that changing the negative attitude towards students' discipline should be on the school's and teacher's agenda by generating the rules. These rules do not have to be anything advanced; they can be as simple as making sure that all students obey to timely attendance and make sure those students know the consequences of missing or being late entering the class as she did before.

Improving Teaching Strategy

Teaching strategies can be referred as teachers' activities that purpose to facilitate learning (Sit, 2017). It helps the teacher to arrange an appropriate learning activity to deliver the materials. The strategy can be implemented through any kinds of activities in the classroom, which include teaching materials, teaching methodology, and instructional media.

Findings from the data concerned about student teacher's teaching strategy in the classroom. There were some instructional media for supporting her teaching in the classroom that identified from her self-assessment, such as learning through pictures, videos, and games. Those media were used in different week to make students more interested in studying.

Excerpt 4

"In the beginning of the learning activity, I conducted apperception by showing video about the names of the days in English". (Transcribed from self-assessment data Q2: September 5, 2019, Author's Translation)

"In the beginning of learning, I conducted apperception by showing some pictures in the screen". (Transcribed from self-assessment data Q5: September 11, 2019, Author's Translation)

"I used an application for practicing or evaluating students' learning. In this application, I could create questions with unique pictures or characters, which appeared in the screen, and then students could answer the questions in their mobile phones with their groups I made before. And of course, there should be good internet network to be connected to Kahoot application by using the link I shared to students. But negatively, this class had bad internet connection, so it spent more time that resulted in inadequate time for other learning activities". (Transcribed from self-assessment data Q4: October 3, 2019, Author's Translation)

"After all of the materials were delivered, I instructed students to review today's materials, because after that there would be a game in the form of matching cards that must be done in groups". (Transcribed from self-assessment data Q5: October 24, 2019, Author's Translation)

Based on the excerpt 4, the instructional media that she used for learning activities are including pictures, videos, online applications (Kahoot) and games. From the four media that she has used, she felt a significant difference when conducting teaching and learning process. When using pictures and videos, students only focused on receiving learning and occasionally asked what they did not understand. There were not many others activities that sparked students' creativity. It was different from using online application and game, students were very enthusiastic when learning. When using *Kahoot*, they were competing to be the winner by answering quickly and accurately, because they could immediately check the score that appeared and automatically can be seen on the screen. Hence, they could find out which group as the winner and which group as the losers. However, this platform needed the good

internet connection and most of students were difficult to use this application, because of the bad internet connection.

At the next meeting, the student teacher used game as instructional media. When she used it, she felt happy because the learning activity was going well, as the students showed very high enthusiasm. They were very excited when she instructed them to match the cards, as stated in the excerpt 5.

Excerpt 5

"I felt comfortable to teach by using game as instructional media, because it was easy to convey the materials and it enhanced students' interest because they were enthusiastic to answer the given questions, and mostly they answered them correctly. In the end of the learning activity, they asked me to use game again for the next meeting, it could be a proof that they loved to learn by using game" (Transcribed from self-assessment data Q2: October 3, 2019, Author's Translation)

"There were 15 pairs of cards which they needed to match, and the group who could match them correctly and most quickly is the winner. I loved to see the enthusiasm of students when they worked together to finish the game. From there, I observed how they worked with each other in group, and helped each other to find out pictures and the vocabulary in the cards to finish the game correctly and quickly" (Transcribed from self-assessment data Q3: October 9, 2019, Author's Translation)

Based on the data from excerpt 5, learning through games was fun both for the student teacher and for the students in learning activity. Some students asked her to provide more games for the next meeting as the result of their interest. Then, the data was concerned about her teaching strategies that made her comfortable and feel successful when teaching in the class, which was learning through games. Game at this point is to provide an effective learning environment by facilitating the processing of visual auditory information, as well as being permanent in memory (Bakan, 2018). Hence, involving games in learning process can help students to boost their engagement and motivation in learning through providing practice and experience.

The finding aligns with Gamed-based learning strategy where the students were motivated to learn with the game as a media to deliver the materials, and it also provides a lot of ways in engaging the students. It is supported by Plass, Homer & Kinzer (2015) who said that games are able to motivate learners to keep them engaged. Hence, as the finding showed a good contribution to the learning process such as motivating students to learn, she should maintain the learning through games activity as an option to her teaching strategy.

Based on the data obtained in this research, it is found that self-assessment can be used as platform of student-teachers' reflection in EFL teaching practice, which enables the student-teachers to learn from their mistakes and success of their performance in the class. In addition, through this self-assessment, the student teacher can take an in-depth look at the culture and climate of the classroom (Allen & Chaerles, 2017). The data expressed that the student-teacher found teaching problems during her teaching and did her best efforts in doing a reflective practice to help her develop her professionalism as a teacher, and solve those problems to achieve learning goals. The result of the research also states that reflective practice in a form of self-assessment can give a good effect for teacher. Therefore, this self-

assessment process will be beneficial for her as it can improve her professional development as a teacher.

CONCLUSION

Reflection through reflective practice in a form of self-assessment is positively proven to be useful for student-teacher's reflection in EFL teaching practice. It is because it gives detail sequence of activities that had been conducted during teaching practice. Moreover, it gives the student-teacher the record in a form of writing self-assessment about the weaknesses and challenges that need to be overcome for a better future teaching. In this study, reflecting on the student teacher's teaching practices enables her to promote the better classroom management skill, and improving her teaching strategy, which suits the students' needs and appropriate with their characteristics. To be able to reflect is an important aspect that teacher needs, because it is can be an effective way for a long term professional development. More importantly, the teacher's daily routine to reflect from previous activities can create a better teaching learning process. In conclusion, reflecting during the process of teaching and learning is not only beneficial for the teacher, but also for the students.

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