

Reflective Practice and Professional Development as an English Language Teacher

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The paper explores reflective practices of how they shape English teachers' professional life. It discloses the experiences of English language teachers of cultivating a reflective mindset to examine a theory-practice gap in classroom teaching, understanding pedagogical practices, using different strategies in EFL class, and developing self-efficacy being a reflective practitioner. Using 'Reflective Practice' as a method of the study, the paper reveals reflective practices as pertinent to developing pedagogical skills, teachers' efficacy, and criticality in the teaching profession which motivates teachers for professional development although different social conditions prohibit them from having reflective practice. The paper is a foundation for motivating English teachers to grow the spirit of willingness and responsibility which aids them to reflect on their teaching practice, transforming them into professional teachers. © IJERE. All rights reserved.

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INTRODUCTION

Recalling The Early Teaching

When starting the teaching profession, teachers may not have an idea about teaching pedagogy or they may not have an idea about classroom management. As a new entrant teacher, the willingness to teach by being open-minded, wholehearted and responsible, could be the way to lead them to be reflective (Dewey, 1933; Gunduz, 2016; Zeichner & Liston, 1987). To be appointed as a teacher at the school which was supported by a German project was a blessing for me. I was pleased to work in a school that was renowned for teaching poor local children.

The school used to have volunteers from Germany. Those volunteers used to observe teachers and give feedback for their improvement. To be observed by foreign volunteers was a difficult situation for every teacher. I just had an idea that teaching is to go to a certain class and explain to students the things that are in their coursebook. As I was a new teacher, my heart would beat faster than usual as I entered the school gate just because of the very presence of those volunteers in the school. Gaining experience and being an efficient teacher takes a few years (Callahan, 2016). I used to remember my former teachers and their teaching since that was the only thing I could recall. Teaching would look like. Whenever I entered the class, I felt like I was there to explain to them the contents of the book one by one and give them some exercise to do. I found every teacher working hard to present their teaching in the best way in front of volunteers. I had no idea of what I could do to make my class effective though I heard of senior teachers' giving effort to impress the volunteers. In the first period, students from class two were waiting for me where they were to learn how to greet others. It was easy to explain from a textbook as the examples were given there and I found it easy to adopt the same technique. As the class was going on, Margaret, one of the volunteers, suddenly entered the class for observation. I felt awkward when Margaret entered the class as that was the first time a foreigner was observing me. I even forgot that I was teaching them about greeting others. Taking a long breath, I turned behind and saw the topic on the blackboard and realized that I must carry on. I finished the class anyhow with a huge nervousness. After finishing the class, Margaret asked me to meet her in my leisure. I had leisure just after that. So, I went to her. Margaret gave me feedback that made me feel like I needed to learn a lot if I was to continue the teaching profession. Margaret told me, "You taught but the students did not pay attention. You could have made them work in a group." I was quiet as I thought "how is it possible to teach students in a group and what does the class look like when teaching in a group". I heard of group work for the first time. Margaret asked, "Which method do you use in your English class? Do you know about teaching methods?" I could not speak because I did not know about any teaching methods then. I was full of shame as I did not have an idea about group work and teaching methods. On that day, I realized that to be a teacher, I needed great commitment as I have to be aware of teaching methods and techniques.

A single question from Margaret made me question my position as a teacher. I took that question as a huge challenge for me. It made me question myself, 'why is my teaching not going well? What is the problem I have as a teacher? What could be done to make my teaching-learning better? Posing these types of questions,

I created a situation where I could inquire about myself as a person and individual and could better help others to understand their inner self (Gnawali, 2008). As an English teacher, my reflection started from the EFL classroom assessment which included my assessment of the pedagogical practices, materials I use, my language teaching, and their effects on students' learning outcomes (Pardo & Téllez, 2015). I faced challenges regarding English as Second Language (ESL) or English as Foreign Language (EFL) and many times, I have reflected upon my teaching practice and minimized the challenges that I faced in the English classroom. Considering the benefits of reflective practice, the present study lays out my teaching experiences as a reflective practitioner which motivated me to practice new and innovative ways of teaching and being a professional English teacher. This study is limited to my experiences of being an English teacher and a reflective practitioner. This study aims at exploring my teaching experiences of practicing innovative ways to improve classroom pedagogy and teachers' efficacy with the discernment of criticality. In light of this, the following themes are set out as my experience of reflective practices.

METHOD

This paper is a reflection of the teaching career of an English teacher as how it added to her professional development. The method that has been used is 'Reflective Practice', the mindful consideration of one's own action (Schon, 1984 as cited in Osterman, 1990). Therefore, the paper has captured the subjective standpoint of a researcher and that is why 'I' is the center of the paper. The exploration of subjective lived experiences and the teaching life with reflective practice has aided the paper to be more reflective.

Cultivating A Reflective Mind-Set

With the thought of taking my academic qualification ahead, I joined my Post Graduate Diploma at one of the reputed universities. I was there to take the course which focused on independent study. During that course, my professor encouraged me to read several books which enlightened me in different matters. In this ride, he recommended to me the book called *Diwaswopna* written by Gijjubhai Badheka (a memoir of a teacher). I read the book from cover to cover without stopping at any point. It just took me 3 hours. This book changed my way to look at myself as a teacher. It made me think about where I was and where I needed to proceed in my teaching profession. It enabled me to undertake metacognition through which I develop motives to improve my professional skills (Sellars, 2012). 'Diwaswopna' is a beautiful story of a teacher who is also the narrator of the story. The entire book is related to how the teacher was able to introduce a new system in Primary Education. It clearly shows that the difficulty appears when somebody tries to bring changes in their ongoing process. The story here presents a scenario of a teacher who continuously keeps his effort on bringing a positive change to the old teaching system. A sarcastic throw is there against the use of textbooks and examinations. The social barriers, the imposition of authority as hindrances, and the emotional attachment of students to the teacher are accessible in the story. I could see the enthusiasm of the teacher that brought up the drastic change in his students' behavior.

The reflective practice provides teachers with opportunities to think upon their practice, experience, and decision-making in a systematic, independent, and collaborative way (Hidayati, 2018). The book shook me as a teacher to be self-aware of my responsibility. I had heard that intensive training develops the reflective habit in teachers (Nurkanto & Sarosa, 2020). However, in my case, my professor's single recommendation to read 'Diwaswopna' helped me tackle different complexities in my teaching profession later. To navigate complex issues and challenges with my engagement in the reflective practices, the teacher education program would help me to apply that on my novice stage (Farrel, 2016) but though it was not in the teacher education program, I got indirect support from my professor to be a reflective practitioner. In our everyday life, we face some puzzling phenomena and we try to deal with them to make sense of it which leads us to reflection in action, going through the process of viewing them superficially in the beginning and later criticizing them, restructuring and embodying them in the future action though the dealing is with the uncertainty and the uniqueness (Schön, 1983). Cultivating a reflective mindset thus, assisted me to grow my motives for improving my professional expertise. Being inspired by the life memoir in *Diwaswopna* and with the encouragement of my professor, I started writing journals every evening to keep the memory of how my class went and what new things did I learn from the particular course. The journey of journal writing continued even in other higher degrees. Following is an excerpt of the reflective journal that I kept during my MPhil course which is about my understanding of writing a descriptive essay.

MPhil in ELE, 14th March '2017'

At the moment, I felt like I am now moving to another step of writing. The type of writing was different and the ideas were different. When we say that we are doing a description work, it normally brings about a picture of the particular thing that is described. Descriptive writing itself is a picture presented in words. It is such a writing that makes us feel like we are having the experience of the writer's experience. I learnt that the descriptive writing consists of a vivid vocabulary. For instance, rather than saying, "He looked at me with anger", we can express, "He stared at me." There are many examples as such which were made familiar to us in the class. Another thing is that, there is a use of sense organs in the descriptive essay. The olfactory, the taste, the visionary, the auditory and the texture are made uncovered in the description. The description gives us the sense of the objects or the places that have been described. The descriptive writing is based on the spatial mode. It has to do with the space. It is the characteristics of descriptive writing that it has to be objective as much as possible. The idea has to be precise and for this vivid vocabulary items are used. The details have to be concrete so that the readers exactly get the idea of the described object. There is a direct meaning in the description but sometimes implicit meaning could also be expressed. When I learnt these many things, I got acquainted with those and now I am

Writing the journals, I learned to reflect on my classes at the university: what I learned and how the class went. That helped me adopt the same habit of reflection for the English classes I took with my students. My professor's recommendations thus, worked as a prescription to cultivate a reflective mindset in me.

My Reflection (Class 6)

April 2018

The students were working on book-based activities. I oriented them that they needed to categorize the stories into five or six different parts and to make a story wheel, story necklace, story flip chart and story frame. I explained that one group had to make one item but the focus was on their writing. I found that some students showed much interest but many of them seem confused. I tried to make them focused on their work. They were discussing along with the work and the discussion was about making their work better than that of the other groups. Again, one or two students in a group were active. They cut out the colorful papers and gave shape to the papers related to the story. The same students wrote everything. I realized that the group work did not go well. It was like individual work as many students remained passive. I think I need to plan in such a way that all students actively participate.

Weather a Storm Through Reflection

It was raining outside and the weather was pretty cool. I was teaching homophones in class six. There were no glasses in the window and students would enjoy the fresh air coming from the window but as it was raining, it was a bit disturbing due to the sound caused by the rainfall. I gave some examples on the board to clarify to students how to make sentences using homophones. As I had already explained the topic on the previous day, I wanted them to make sentences using homophones in their notebooks. As I was turning behind to write on the board, the students made too much noise. I kept on writing examples to make them understand the homophones. Suddenly the noise was too high that I wanted to know the reason behind it. I saw everyone looking outside with a huge interest in a sudden fall of hailstones which was nothing surprising for me. I shouted at them and asked them to concentrate on their study. The theory of education that I gained in pre-service and in-service preparation was not applicable when it came to real practice (Farrel, 2019; Moyo & Modiba, 2013; Pacheco, 2005). Those who were near the window were taking their hand out and collecting some hailstones and others were enjoying the fall of hailstones. It was difficult for me to control the class. I told them if they are not going to concentrate on homophones, I would go out of the class. I pointed out some homophones on the board; bear-bare, ate-eight, flower-flour, poor-pour, see-sea and tail/tale. They were still looking outside. As it was too much, I went out of the class with a feeling of failure to handle the class. I did not know whether to go inside the class again or not. After ten minutes, I went to the class but I did not see any humiliation on the students' faces. I finished that class bearing a tough time and went to the staff room.

With a cool mind, I reflected before, after and beyond the lesson (Cirocki & Widodo, 2019). I denied having problems in my teaching. I thought my students were out of discipline. I thought for a while and tried to focus on the reason for their noise and realized that the problem was in me, not in the students. Reflective action made me engage in self-evaluation and development (Kuswandono, 2017). That too helped me to bring positive feelings upon my 'self' and 'profession' (Ghaye, 2011) as well as encouraged me to look back and see what has happened in order to get meaning of the action taken (Dewey, 1938) and to reflective literacy skills that would transform my current practices (Achugar & Carpenter, 2018). I realized that I did not do anything in the class which would make them pay attention to my teaching whereas the weather was attracting them with something different than the usual rainfall i.e. the hailstones.

I focused on the mastery of the subject matter of teaching which is the theoretical knowledge but failed to focus on the mastery of the techniques to apply in the real classroom which is of another huge value (Shulman, 1998). Then I jotted down some ideas of what would help me teach them homophones in that situation. Maybe I could have let them enjoy the weather and could have connected the topic with that situation. For example, I could have asked students to think of some homophones related to the situation such as rain-reign, hail- hell, weather- whether, sun- son, see-sea, breeze-bridge, and so on. That would make the noise productive and help to control the class. I failed to do that in class six but I thought of changing my plan for the next day. At least, I made them recall the previous day's weather and took the class in the way I planned. I noticed that the students were much engaged in class though some students were disruptive as usual. I found that stated that self-reflections served complementary roles in my learning as an English teacher which led me to shape my language teaching theory and practice (Hanane, 2015; Pawan & Fan, 2014). From this incident, I gained insight that preparing language teachers with a subject and pedagogical content knowledge is not enough as the unknown realities come across their life which vary from context to context and individual to individual (Farrel, 2016). Most often, I tried to teach content without letting students enjoy and explore and that does not help always. I learned theoretical stuff but did not learn how to run classes in a practical setting which created problems. Therefore there needs to have the know-how of both theory and practice to deal with the problem that arises. By reflecting upon the teaching, the English teachers see the gap between theory and practice more clearly and that helps them to fill that gap.

NIP Something in The Bud: The Understanding of Pedagogical Skills

I started putting into practice the theories of teaching and learning which required me to make my classroom a social setting with good pedagogy where I could interact with my students and could engage them deeply with the invented activities (Danielewicz, 2001). Earning pedagogical skills is one of the greatest assets for me as a teacher of English which gave me a platform to understand my teaching practices from the ground level. I had motivation as an English teacher, I always wanted my students to like me with my way of teaching. I started using different methods in my English class which would make them focused on their learning. Reflective teaching was one of the strategies for me to update my teaching methodologies and to open my mind to make improvements in my lessons (Olaya Mesa, 2018). I mostly involved students in communicative language learning where students were given a platform to communicate with each other. I noticed that the students felt easy to share their ideas in English and they started speaking more and even had less hesitation to go to the front and speak on certain topics.

When I tried Total Physical Response (TPR) in class, getting students to act and say the expressions simultaneously, the students would say the words, jump or walk and giggle at the same time. They really had fun. I reflected upon the least memorizing habit in students and tried doing it differently. Even memorization became enjoyable with Task-Based Learning (TBL) when it was turned into group work with a task. That made them responsible for memorization and to share their learning with the other group. I reflected and developed an understanding of my teaching which helped me to assess my professional growth as well as provided me with decision-making skills and confidence (Farrel, 2018). With reflection, teachers improve their pedagogical skills which help them reflect upon their teaching. This is possible with the strategies such as teaching journals, critical friends, critical incidents, teacher development groups, and classroom observations of the senior teachers to learn to conduct action research. The following is one of the critical incidents from my notebook.

In a group, Reema, Shreya, Diwas, and Madan were working on a chart paper on the topic 'our community'. Diwas told me that he does everything better than others. So, he wanted to do everything himself. For a while, Reema, Shreya, and Madan were quiet. Reema looked around and said that everybody in a group can take one responsibility each. She reminded me that Shreya had good handwriting and that Madan was good at drawing. She asked Diwas to jot down the idea. Then, Diwas quickly said, "Then, you can give design to the chart paper as you are good at designing."

I noted down the above anecdote as the critical incident as it was the incident that reminded me of carrying out group work and getting to know the benefit of group work since the students were engaged in problem-solving and critical thinking. When I reflect on this critical incident, I see my students' contributing ability and agreeing ability which they developed out of group work in which they were engaged. Reflection helped me view my abilities to understand classroom practices, knowledge, perception, and beliefs regarding their growth as professional English teachers (Kabilan, 2007) and to be critically reflective which built a habit of constantly trying to identify and check the assumptions which informed about my actions as a teacher and made me take actions intending to help students learn it (Brookfield, 2017). The reflective practice became a tool for me to ponder upon different pedagogical skills such as instructional accommodation, scaffolding students to comprehend the English language, and focusing on their needs (Olivera & Shoffner, 2009). The reflective practice provided me an opportunity to address the issues related to classroom pedagogy and to use the knowledge I built personally and socially to consider my pedagogical practices and dispositions. Reflective practice thus assisted me to build my skills to bring improvement in classroom pedagogy.

Gaining Ground: Trying New Techniques and Reflecting

When I reflected on my teaching, I see myself as the one who did not use different strategies to teach English in the early phase of my teaching. From the courses in my master's degree, I got an idea about developing materials for different topics related to English and making those materials available to the students. In light of that knowledge, I gradually started developing materials such as learning mats where different instructions are given and students have to write with the board marker so that the next student can use the same learning mat after erasing the previously written work. Apart from materials, I too used some strategies in my classroom to increase my students' writing flow. This made me a teacher with knowledge, skills, and the ability to apply different activities as strategies to teach English (Intarapanich, 2013). By applying different strategies, I could well explain the course matters. Reflecting upon my action, I recalled my experiences (Maulid, 2017) and realized that I put forward to my students, nothing interesting but just a piece of exercises from the coursebook was given. Keeping this in mind, I started 'journal writing' as one of the strategies to make my students develop creative writing so that they can increase their writing flow in English language class. For that, the topic was given in a way that would completely relate to them. For example; 'About my family', 'My happy and sad moments,' 'The only person who is priceless to me', 'The thing that needs to be changed in our school' and so on. The interesting thing about the journal class was that they did not have to take tension of errors. I would just give comments to them with positive vibrations and that improved their flow in English writing.

The use of reflective tools supported me to go back to what I did and see the flaws I made there to take action to reduce that flaws in the next teaching (Göker, 2006). My step toward journal writing brought an unbelievable change in my students with a good pace of development in their writing skills. Similarly, I started keeping reading records in my English class which encouraged students to add more to their reading lists. The reflective practice helped me to self-rate my performance as an English language teacher of my use of it in the language classroom which reveals my willingness to learn about my students' learning styles and preferences and also their strengths and weaknesses (Kömür & Gün, 2016). I used several strategies and techniques that I needed to use as an English teacher which included questioning, correcting, reading, and repeating passages, giving the information of language in detail and practicing them time and again (Seghayer, 2009 as cited in Al-Awaid, 2018). By using different strategies within the reflective practice, I could even learn about the strengths and weaknesses of my students which ultimately assisted me in teaching English.

With Might and Main: Self-Efficacy Through Reflection

Being an English teacher, I have realized many times that my class did not go well and that I was not able to deal with classroom problems. When I reflect on my classroom practice, I realized that I had no promptness in terms of plan and preparation of materials and decision-making which had made me less confident. With self-efficacy, I gained confidence in my ability to do something for the promotion of learning which helped me to be flexible in dealing with classroom problems (Mehmood, 2019). As an English teacher, I had to cope with the complexity of designing material and the pedagogy and reflecting upon my experience helped me to self-direct myself in shaping my teacher autonomy (Booth, Guinmard & Lloyd, 2017). Reflecting upon my teaching experience, I sometimes recall the complexities I went through and find that it was not easy. To bring some change in the classroom was like going against the teacher colleagues. It was like going against the established culture in the school. Making different materials to teach English to my students resulted in making me feel like I was doing something that was against other teachers and that even made me feel lonely when my colleagues used to give me dialogues for trying to be different than them. However, I continuously persevered to bring changes in teaching pedagogy, to make myself self-efficacious.

I actively engaged in the exploration of making my class better and this made me equip with more self-efficacy as there is a positive association between reflective practices, self-efficacy, and research practice (Rahimi & Weisi, 2018). Practicing research helped me explore more and more about the prevailing situation in the classroom. I learned the value of action research which encouraged me to identify the problem and to make action plans to intervene in the plan in class for improving the students' performance. I added to my self-efficacy with documentation of the whole research as an action research report. My teacher colleague, primary English teacher wanted to carry on with what I started. We two started sitting together for planning and delivery which assisted us to reflect on our teaching together with ease (Matilde & Martinez, 2018) and to improve our teaching process. With self and peer reflective practice, we both were able to take teacher agencies in language teaching which helped us gain 'trust' which was vital to create communities of practice for sharing and learning culture and to bring 'innovative practice in teaching English' (Tutunis & Hacifazlioglu, 2018). Reflecting on the teaching experiences I have had, I could view the success and the failure both of which made me strong enough to decide how to tackle the problems I faced while teaching.

I started keeping a teaching portfolio which enabled me to go through it and recall many relevant knowledge and skills. The practicum experiences influenced my learning which reminded me of success after a struggle, helping me to reflect on those struggles/successes and engage regularly with my peers to reflect on the meaning of experiences to take the next steps (Wetzel et al., 2018). With the reflective practices, I recall my long journey of being a novice English teacher turning into a self-efficacious English teacher. Self-efficacy gave me a personal determination of my ability to deal with certain things that were specific to the contexts which could be generalized to other situations of having efficacy improved (Genc, Kulusakli & Aydin, 2016). I gained that self-efficacy and still gaining it to enrich myself as a professional English teacher.

A Disposition of Criticality

I established my identity as an English language teacher and I am learning to have a reflective practice that has enhanced my teaching skills and brought changes in my instructional practices. However, I still find challenging to reflect on my strengths and weaknesses (Pandey, 2012). A lack of seminars, workshops, or training hindered me from learning the ways to bring modifications to my teaching practices but an inability to reflect on my teaching prohibited me to discern my strengths and weaknesses (Sunra, Haryanto & Nur, 2020). I found reflective practice as a challenge for it is not only the tool to reflect on my pedagogical practices or my growth as an English teacher, rather it is also the tool to reflect on the entities that I lost on my journey of teaching which is now nowhere to be found. The tragedy of losing an eight years old Mahenk, haunts me even today for not being able to save him. Though he became a victim of an accident on his way to Manakamana (the temple), I recall the moment when he was very excited to tell me that he was going to Manakamna the next day. I cannot forgive myself for being too concentrated on running the course of English and not giving much attention to Mahenk's excitement. If only I had given some suggestions regarding the safety measures that any person needs while traveling, Mahenk wouldn't have taken his head out of the car in excitement and he wouldn't face such a massive accident that swiped away his life. That accident reminds me of my failure not being able to give practical lessons to children. Mahenk's death was the point when I

learned that teachers' duty is not only to teach but also to listen to the students and to give them real-world lessons.

When I reflect on my teaching, I feel like I need to have more practice in self-reflection to know more about myself as a teacher and to bring necessary changes in my pedagogical practices (Niones, 2018). I remember this and feel bad thinking of Mahenk who just lives in my memory now. This is one of the challenges of reflective practices that I could recall emotional aspects of my journey through the power of criticality which might disappoint me sometimes. In this journey of reflective practice, I realized the need for training, workshops, short term courses, and discussion groups (Sah, 2015) and also the need for reflective practice for professional development as I remember the situation when I was unaware of reflective practices (Bharati & Chalise, 2017) and I found it less applicable especially in the context of Nepal, having seven or eight classes a day and a large number of students that stopped teachers from doing what they are supposed to do and the lack of administrative support to provide materials for reflective teaching in English language class (Joshi, Gnawali & Dixon, 2018). In the midst of these, it was difficult to understand the complexities of the English language that incorporate an understanding of the social conditions that influence its teaching (Kano, Ayana & Chali, 2017). The complexities incorporated my concentration on the salary and time rather than thinking of transforming my teaching-learning practices (Nyaupane, 2018). Changing the minds and thoughts, the reflective practice turned out to be a tool to bring reformative practices through criticality, to make me aware of reality, and to help me teach with satisfaction. It aided me to invent new ideas for teaching effectively in EFL classes in the context of Nepal.

Cut to The Chase: Reflection as Central to Professional Development

I am proud to be in a position where I share knowledge, skills, and values with others. Dwelling in the position of teacher, I aspire to develop myself as a professional English teacher and one of the ways to do this is through reflective practice. I took reflective practice as an important concept as it initiated my performance in the development of professional practice (Craft, 2002; Erlandson & Beach, 2008; Schön, 1983). By taking on the reflective practice, I was aware of what is going on in my class and could explore my underlying beliefs by evaluating my past and current practices which ultimately helped me to decide what to do as the next step (Mathew, Mathew & Peechattu, 2017). When I developed a habit of reflecting on my own identity, beliefs, or my teaching practice, I recognized the transformative potential of the activities of reflection and started counting the developmental value (Cirocki, & Burns, 2019). I faced many problems that arise in the classroom and I dealt with those problems by looking back at what occurred when the teaching-learning took place and by taking future actions to improve my practices (Schön, 1983). The reflective practice assisted me to view my pedagogical and professional state which made me improve my action regarding both.

Along with the changes in my pedagogical practices, I developed my professional skills improving my self-efficacy. From a professed English teacher, I became a professional English teacher by updating myself in the field of my profession. Along with my experiences of reflecting upon my practices, I am learning to establish the habit of reflecting and taking action for tackling the situations (Gibbs, 1988). This includes the priority that I am giving to my academic qualification, my move toward bringing creativity to the English language classroom and making students engage in creative writing workshops, being innovative in terms of launching different language projects like writers' workshops or speakers' clubs in school, identifying the problem in the language classroom and making action plans to conduct action research to bring improvement in the situation, to take several pieces of training and workshops, to participate in the conferences and grab the opportunities to present the papers and to visit different schools home and abroad to see the ongoing practices there and to adopt at least one of the practices from those schools in own school.

When I reflect on my teaching practice, I found myself dead with the adoption of old traditional ways of teaching. Now, with the help of reflective practice, I could bring change in my practices and in my professional growth, which has made me alive in this profession as a teacher full of spirit. With this change, I have now seen the kingdom where there is fullness in teaching and satisfaction in being an English teacher. I am learning to walk on the path of continuous professional development which can be acquired by being a learner, being updated about training, and being competitive for which reflective practice can be an essential tool (Stăncescu et.al, 2019). As an English language teacher, I am encouraged to join different teacher education programs which may give me more exposure to teaching-learning activities and trigger me to have reflective

practice (Nurfaidah, 2018). Reflective practice has taught me to be more open to change and this change has brought transformation in my teaching-learning process. As an English teacher, I have understood the potential of open-mindedness to bring effectiveness to the teaching process which helped me to stand as a self-confident teacher in the field of education (Pacheco, 2005). Reflective practice has prepared me as a critical thinker to view the past and bring changes in the present to take good future actions. With that, I am still learning to be a successful reflective practitioner which would assist me to develop further as an efficient professional English teacher.

CONCLUSION

After many years, on my journey of reflection, I see light at the end of the tunnel. Reflective practices are supportive to the English teachers to bring newness in their teaching. EFL teachers are aware of reflective practices and they follow many ways to cultivate a reflective mindset. Being reflective practitioners, English teachers reflect on their actions and view the strengths and weaknesses of those taken actions. They find ways to make themselves self-efficacious with the change in their teaching practice by bridging the theory-practice gap in their classroom. The struggle I did in my teaching career as an English teacher made me ready to follow the path of reflection which showed me where I was as an English teacher and inspired me to bring changes in my pedagogical practices. By the use of different strategies in the English classroom, English teachers give students their best to make the students learn English with ease and as per their needs. Many situations may prohibit teachers from having reflective practice which includes time limitations, classroom size, number of students, salary, and emotional hurdles. However, the reflective practice creates a willingness in teachers to make their English class effective. Reflective practice is a tool to prepare me as a whole-hearted teacher who is ready to invite new challenges in the teaching process. This paper would contribute to the existing knowledge in English Language Teaching as it encourages reflective practices in classroom teaching as well as in the professional growth of English teachers. Also, it contributes to the existing knowledge in Teacher Professional Development as it focuses on the efforts that teachers need to make to foster their professional growth in general, and in particular, it encourages the English teachers to be forward in taking English language training, attending conferences related to ELT and building themselves as the English teachers with the spirit of whole-heartedness and responsibility (Dewey, 1933). With reflective practices, English teachers not only change their teaching strategies or impact their students' learning but also make a way for their professional development.

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