



The challenge of producing progressive teachers in Malaysia: A case study of reflective writings among UPSI student teachers

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Abstract

Because Malaysia is determined to produce high quality teachers who are able to become agents of change and empowered decision makers about their teaching practices, it becomes the responsibility of teacher education institutions in the country to train teachers to be reflective. This study examines 428 self-reflection notes (SRNs) of seven student teachers (STs) sampled from Sultan Idris Education University (UPSI) during their teaching practicum. Semi-structured interviews were carried out to gauge the STs' perceptions of the SRNs and identify the problems faced by them during reflection. The main aspects of the SRNs were feedback and assessment, lesson implementation, lesson preparation, classroom management and professional attributes. The reflection level of the STs was analyzed based on Van Manen's categorization using content analysis of the SRNs reflective components. The findings revealed that majority of the research participants were barely reflective as their SRNs were mostly exhibiting at technical level. There were also SRNs that were at practical level but none of them had achieved the highest (critical) level of reflection. Among the problems encountered by STs when reflecting were the absence of a given format in writing SRNs, time constraints, workload problems, difficulty in suggesting recommendations to overcome problems, lack of guidance from supervising lecturers, and problems in determining aspects of focus in the SRNs.

Keywords: critical level, practical level, reflective writings, self-reflection notes, teacher clinical experience, technical level

Introduction

The teacher education programme aims to produce teachers who are "noble in character, progressive and scientific in outlook, committed to uphold the aspirations of the nation, and cherishes the national cultural heritage, ensures the development of the individual and the preservation of a united, democratic, progressive and disciplined society" (The Philosophy of Teacher Education, 1982:14). Based on the Philosophy of Teacher Education and Preliminary Report of Malaysia Education Blueprint (2013-2025), the Teacher Education Division (TED) continuously enhances teachers' abilities through its curriculum changes. The changes are such as the application of thinking skills and information technology, as well as knowledge based course work (Boon & Wee, 2005). All these changes are aimed to produce high quality teachers and improve the quality of teaching.

Therefore, teacher education institutions are responsible to produce high quality teachers who are able to become agents of change and empowered decision makers about their teaching practices. One of the efforts is through activities promoting reflection in teacher education programmes. By incorporating reflection early in the teacher education programmes, it provides opportunity to student teachers (STs) in considering how the acquisition of new theories shapes their understanding of their own teaching

philosophy (Rieger, Radcliffe, & Doepker, 2013). Reflection has been famous in teacher education programme as a practice that seeks to raise the motivation of teachers to carry out self-improvement process and improvement of teaching performance (Nor Hasniza Ibrahim, Mohammad Yusof Arshad, & Johari Surif, 2008).

In the field of teacher education, reflection has been identified as an important part of teaching (Hanipah Hussin, 2003) and a key element for teacher professional development (Adibah Ismail et al., 2002). It is also said to be important in bridging the gap between theory and practice (Hanipah Hussin, 2003), shifting the teachers' expertise to critical evaluation and enabling teachers to take a more active role in their own profession accountability (Adibah Ismail et al., 2002). Enhancing reflection skills and practices may be seen as a way to improve teaching practices and reflection outcomes in teacher education. Thus, there is a need to prepare reflective teachers in our teacher education. This is very important in order to produce teachers who are able to reflect upon their behaviours and surroundings, as well as to make reasonable decisions (Boon & Wee, 2005).

In Malaysia, the Higher Education Sector, Ministry of Education Malaysia has recognized the importance of linking theory and practice in university practice (Hanipah Hussin, 2003). In order to address the issue of integrating theory and practice, teacher educators in the university in Malaysia asserted that the application of reflection is one of the essential techniques to be practice (Hanipah Hussin, 2003). Therefore, all teacher education institutions in Malaysia have placed great emphasis on fostering the practice of reflection among STs especially during teacher clinical experience (TCE). For instance, it is clearly stated in the UPSI Teaching Practicum Handbook, which has pointed out STs "are required to provide a reflection/self-assessment report after the process of teaching and learning has taken place" (2013:21). This showed that a ST is required to apply reflective thinking as a practice in order for him or her to become an effective trained teacher.

To better equip STs become more reflective, a variety of techniques and tools for reflection were explored and introduced in teacher education programmes to enhance the mastery of reflection skills among STs (Kocoglu, Akyel, & Ercetin, 2008). Reflective journal writing for instance, is a tool or technique suggested by educators in various fields to stimulate reflection (Adibah Ismail et al., 2002; Kocoglu et al., 2008; Goh & Matthews, 2011; Lakshmi, 2012; Rieger et al., 2013). It can also be regarded as an exercise in which STs are able to express their understandings, reflections and responses to an event or concept.

However, review of research literature on STs' reflective journal entries collected at the end of the TCE have found that STs' reflective writings were descriptive in nature and only exhibiting at a very low level of reflection based on Van Manen's categorization of levels of reflection (Toh, 2001; Boon & Wee, 2005). STs were also found to make judgemental reports or describe the events, problems, comments of supervisors, or to provide recommendations for further actions without giving any reason, rationale and justification (Toh, 2001).

Supposedly, STs especially those who will be undergoing TCE should be able to identify issues or aspects that are referred as main focus of reflective writings by describing the feelings or inner voices; developing perception of oneself; acquiring new awareness; providing recommendations, and then plan further action to resolve the issues or aspects. It is utmost important for STs to know their roles during TCE because TCE is a vital component in teacher education which prepares STs to undergo a live experience in terms of a real teaching career life (Wong et al., 2014).

Therefore, this study was conducted to examine in depth about the self-reflection notes (SRNs) written by STs undergoing TCE. More specifically, this study aimed to identify the aspects that are frequently written by STs in their SRNs; level of reflection among STs through their SRNs; STs' perceptions of the SRNs written by them; and problems faced by STs when they reflect. As such, the research findings are expected to provide an insight into the ability of STs to reflect upon their practices during TCE. Additionally, it is also expected that this input can help the teacher educators in providing guidance on how to write good SRNs to their STs in the future.

Literature review

The reflection concept was put forward by Dewey who introduced reflective thought as the “active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it and the further conclusions to which it tends” (1933:7). Dewey stated that the function of reflective thought is “to transform a situation in which there is experienced obscurity, doubt, conflict, disturbance of some sort, into a situation that is clear, coherent, settled and harmonious” (1933:195). This reflection concept is said to be the basis for most of the existing theories of nowadays. According to Dewey (1933), there are three prerequisite attitudes that should be cultivated in order to promote reflection, such as open-mindedness, responsibility, and whole-heartedness.

In addition, Van Manen (1977) has proposed a framework for determining the different categories of reflectivity. There are three hierarchical levels of reflection ranging from technical reflection, practical reflection and critical reflection. Technical level is the level where by teachers analyze the effects of methods and strategies applied in teaching. On the other hand, practical level is the level at which teachers reflect upon the underlying assumptions for their practices in the classroom and the implications of their practices on students’ learning. Critical level is the level at which teachers question the moral and ethical dimensions of the decision taken by them in teaching. At this level, teachers find connection or link between the situations faced with social, economic and political factors that might affect the situations.

Meanwhile, Hatton and Smith (1995) also proposed a list of criteria to recognize the evidence for different levels of reflection which consist of descriptive writing, descriptive reflection, dialogic reflection and critical reflection. According to Hatton and Smith (1995), most new teachers focus on the technical dimensions but the study of Guillaume and Rudney (1993) found that STs’ journals showed evidence of an increased level of reflection from the technical level to a higher level when they gained experience.

Furthermore, as already indicated, various techniques or tools for reflection have been explored and used in teacher education programmes to facilitate and enhance reflection. Much research literatures on few commonly mentioned techniques or tools for reflection such as reflective journal writing, blogs, portfolio, peer observation and video-recording have indicated that several reflective components were raised in these five reflective tools (Pennington, 2010; Goh & Matthews, 2011; Tan, Tan, & Wettasinghe, 2011; British Council, 2012; Pellegrino & Gerber, 2012; Doyran, 2013).

The most common reflective components that have been identified in all the five reflective tools are lesson preparation; lesson implementation; feedback and assessment; classroom management; and professional attributes. The first reflective component is “Lesson Preparation” representing the process of providing evidence of having thorough thought regarding various main aspects of the lesson. Next, “Lesson Implementation” refers to the process of engaging meaningfully in the introduction, development and closure of a lesson, as well as motivating students through appropriate activities in order to achieve the learning objectives.

The third reflective component is “Feedback and Assessment” which involves the process of giving feedback to students that intended to inform them about their performance and assisting them in learning how to assess and improve their own learning. The fourth reflective component, “Classroom Management” is referring to the process of approaching and interacting with students in a friendly manner, as well as recognizing the importance of a supportive learning environment. Lastly, “Professional Attributes” refers to the professional qualities such as empathy, caring, communication abilities, organizational abilities, flexibility, positivistic, adaptability and so on that STs need to be aware of, as well as eventually to develop and demonstrate these professional qualities.

Research methodology

Research design

This study used a qualitative approach other than basic statistics based on case study.

Research participants

Research participants were seven UPSI STs of semester seven, who specialized in Bachelor of Education with honours in Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) and who were undergoing TCE from February to June 2014 in secondary schools around the state of Selangor and Perak. Pseudonyms were used in the study and they were known as Fatin, Afiq, Najwa, Nasser, Tan, Tee and Atiqah. The participants were selected because they were undergoing TCE in secondary schools which are near to the UPSI and this could facilitate the process of data collection.

Data collection techniques

A total of 428 SRNs written by the research participants after every session of teaching and learning process for only English subject were collected after they have completed their TCE. Other than that, purposive interviews were also conducted on October 15, 2014 with Fatin, Afiq, Najwa and Nasser. Only four participants were interviewed due to time constraints. Furthermore, a longer time will be needed to produce the transcripts for the interview recordings that have been done. These interviews were conducted after their SRNs were read and analyzed.

The purposes of the interviews were to confirm the information written by them and also to obtain further clarification of the vague information. The individual interviews were conducted in the UPSI Education Research Laboratory (UERL), Tanjong Malim, Perak. In addition, the interviews also aimed to answer the STs' perceptions of the SRNs and also to identify the problems faced by them during reflection. The interviews were done by using semi-structured questions. The conversation during the interview sessions was recorded and later transcribed.

Data analysis

The SRNs in STs' daily lesson plan books were analyzed thoroughly based on the categories of reflective components such as lesson preparation; lesson implementation; feedback and assessment; classroom management; and professional attributes. Each SRN written by the research participants was given specific codes according to the focus of reflection such as events, observations or issues that have been reported.

For the second research objective, the SRNs in STs' daily lesson plan books were analyzed based on the categorization of levels of reflection proposed by Van Manen (1977) in order to determine the level of reflection among STs. The SRNs were coded by using the code RW/P1/1/2, in which the RW represented the reflective writing; P1 represented first participant; 1 represented the note number; and 2 represented the page number.

Furthermore, interviews were conducted with participants by using semi-structured questions. The recordings of the interview were transcribed and then presented to the participants for review. This was very important for the purpose of verifying the information. The interview transcripts were coded by using the code I1/X/1/2, in which the I1 represented the first interview; X represented the name of participant; 1 represented the excerpt number; and 2 represented the page number.

Research findings

This section discusses the findings based on the research objectives.

Aspects that are frequently written in the reflective writings

Content analysis conducted on the total number of 428 SRNs collected from all seven participants has found that the aspects that were frequently written in the reflective writings are discussed as listed in Table 1.

Table 1. Participants' reflective writings in the self-reflection notes based on the categories of reflective components

Participant Reflective Component	Fatin	Afiq	Najwa	Nasser	Tan	Tee	Atiqah	Total	Percentage (%)
Lesson Preparation	0	4	1	8	0	5	3	21	4.9
Lesson Implementation	15	36	12	21	7	22	19	132	30.8
Feedback And Assessment	27	16	5	29	55	33	38	203	47.4
Classroom Management	3	2	3	10	0	1	1	20	4.7
Professional Attributes	0	1	3	0	0	0	1	5	1.2
Others	0	0	21	7	0	8	11	47	11.0

As much as 47.4% SRNs of all seven research participants were on feedback and assessment. Among the aspects discussed are feedback given to the students; student understanding; assessment procedures; student's motivation and student's learning progress. The following is one example of the participant's SRN that focused on aspects of feedback and assessment:

"This lesson went well at the beginning because the students initially understood the explanation I gave and they were able to give two simple sentences on their own. However, after they have done the exercise given, they were still confused on how to use the articles correctly. Only one student managed to be able to answer 7 out of 10 questions correctly in the cloze passage exercise" (RW/P7/32/87).

Lesson implementation is the second aspect that was frequently discussed by the research participants. About 30.8% of the participants' SRNs were on lesson implementation. Among the aspects discussed are such as teaching techniques; teaching steps; achievement of the lesson objectives; set induction; explanation stage; practice stage; production stage; closure; questioning and responding techniques; instructions and explanations given; student participation in learning and student's interests. For instance, one example of the participant's SRN on lesson implementation is as follow.

"During set induction, some of the students had forgotten the relationship between characters. Therefore, I have to do a little bit of revision with them...Next, in the explanation stage, during the explanation of theme, it was a bit hard as it was their first time stumbling with theme but after I had explained everything, they seem to get the basic idea...Practice stage is where I'd tested their understanding..." (RW/P2/19/42).

In addition, 4.9% of the SRNs written by all seven research participants were on lesson preparation. Among the aspects discussed are teaching methods, strategies or techniques, learning activities and resources to be used in the lesson, as well as the lesson objectives to be achieved. For example, the following is the SRN on lesson preparation written by Nasser.

“While carrying out my lesson, I found that my students have not read the graphic novel although I had instructed them to do so earlier. I knew this would happen. Therefore, I’ve prepared activities that require them to read the novel in class...” (RW/P4/23/56).

Classroom management is an aspect that is not much discussed by the research participants. A total of 4.7% of the participants’ SRNs were about classroom control. Example of SRN written by Fatin is as follow.

“...Because of the lesson was during the afternoon session, some students felt exhausted and they slept in class. I asked them to wash their faces and give them time to ready for the lesson...” (RW/P1/15/43).

Professional attributes are the least discussed aspects by the research participants. Only 1.2% of the participants’ SRNs were about the professional attributes. For instance, among the aspects discussed include professional qualities like reflectivity, caring, empathy, flexibility, positivistic, adaptability and communication abilities. One example of SRN written by Najwa;

“...By reflecting back toward my teaching skill, I do believe there some weaknesses that I need to change or improve. This was because I realised that I need to slow down my speech while explaining certain topic to the students...so that I will make the students more aware of the lesson” (RW/P3/41/96).

It was discovered that 11.0% of the participants’ SRNs fall into aspects other than the aspects discussed based on the categories of reflective components, such as interruption in classroom teaching due to organized events or activities and teacher’s sick leave. Two examples of the participants’ SRNs:

“Lesson plan could not be conducted. Class was taken over by Pn. Karamjee for oral test. Lesson plan will be carried forward to Friday” (RW/P6/55/122).

“The lesson could not be conducted because the students were involved with the co-curricular activities held at the field” (RW/P7/22/55).

As a summary, these existing data suggests that most research participants’ focus more on the aspects of feedback and assessment, also lesson implementation as these two aspects are frequently written in the reflective writings of their SRNs compared to the aspects of lesson preparation, classroom management and professional attributes.

Level of reflection among student teachers through their reflective writings

The level of reflection among STs was identified based on the categorization of Van Manen’s (1977) levels of reflection through document analysis of their reflective writings in the SRNs. Table 2 shows the frequency and percentage of SRN entries based on the Van Manen’s levels of reflection for all the SRNs collected.

Table 2. Frequency and percentage of self-reflection note entries based on the Van Manen’s levels of reflection

Van Manen’s Levels of Reflection	Technical	Practical	Critical
Frequency	404 (94.4%)	24 (5.6%)	0 (0%)

Table 2 reveals that 94.4% of participants’ SRNs were only at the technical level, which means that they only analyzed the effects of methods and strategies applied in teaching. In other words, they were merely reporting or describing the application of knowledge and skills in the classroom by giving tradition or personal preference as reason/justification/rationale. This represents a very low level of reflection among the research participants. SRNs written by Tee, for instance, frequently reported on the effects of methods and strategies applied in teaching without any further detail explanation.

“Students did not have any idea of what figurative language is at the beginning of the class. I need to explain the terms before students were able to identify the examples in the text. Instead of explaining all the terms at one time, I explained one term and then students tried to find out the example from the text. Through one-by-one guidance and explanation, students could grasp” (RW/P6/61/135).

Nevertheless, only 5.6% of the participants’ SRNs were at the practical level, that is questioning and reflecting on the underlying assumptions of the teaching practices in the classroom and the outcomes of the practices on students’ learning by providing reasons or justifications based on pedagogical principle or theory and also consideration of contextual factors. For example, the SRN written by Fatin.

“Students get excited when it comes to speaking activity. The task cards/situation cards which are designed in colourful materials attract and excite them. I think this idea is much better and I have improved myself in developing materials for classroom teaching. Students are more active in responding to my questions compared to previous lessons. This is due to my technique of questioning is more simplified and it triggered them to think and speak...” (RW/P1/18/44).

In addition, none of the 428 SRNs collected were able to achieve the highest level of reflection, that is the critical level. With this, it can be concluded that majority of the participants’ SRNs were at the technical level, however, some SRNs were written at the practical level but none at the critical level. Given that the technical level represents Van Manen’s lowest level of reflection, the data shows very little evidence of reflectivity beyond this level of reflection. Therefore, it is shown that seven STs of semester seven who have participated in this study have yet to reach the level of reflection as expected.

Student teachers’ perceptions of the self-reflection notes written by them

All the research participants, such as Fatin, Afiq, Najwa and Nasser who were interviewed have argued that the SRNs written by them were important and useful to them. Fatin, for example said that:

“...writing self-reflection note is something quite good and rather helpful, whereby we can know whether our teaching objectives are achieved or not...besides that, we also can know whether our teaching and learning methods are appropriate or not...errm...as well as know how the students respond to our teaching...self-reflection note is actually important for us to see our weaknesses and gives us the opportunity to try to improve ourselves in the future lesson...” (I1/F/85/3).

In addition, Afiq suggested that the SRNs could help him planning for further action. According to him,

“...writing self-reflection note is important and useful to me...I am pretty easy to forget what is happening on a daily basis, so it is easier for me to remember what happened in the classroom or what happened during and after the lesson by writing the self-reflection notes...with this self-reflection notes, I can take actions on what I have written in order to correct the weaknesses that I have...” (I2/A/91/3).

Overall, the above interview findings show that STs understand the importance of SRNs and the necessity of writing them as they believed that SRNs are able to help them in professional growth development and teaching performance improvement.

Problems faced by student teachers when they reflect

All the research participants being interviewed (Fatin, Afiq, Najwa and Nasser) have stated that they have encountered some problems while writing the SRNs. There are some problems highlighted in the interview session when they were asked about the problems faced in the process of writing SRNs. Among the problems faced are such as no format was given in writing SRNs; time constraints; workload problems; difficulty in suggesting recommendations to overcome problems; lack of guidance from supervising lecturers; and problems in determining the aspects to be focused in the SRNs. According to Fatin,

“...arr, I think...to start writing a self-reflection notes of course is difficult...because there is no format given for writing reflection, so usually I will see how other people start writing their reflection...then I will try to follow their style of writing...it would be better if there is a fixed format given so that we can follow and the reflections can be written in the same format to avoid confusion...” (I1/F/99/3).

Meanwhile, Fatin, Afiq and Nasser stated that time constraints have been huge problem for them when writing SRNs. According to Afiq, time constraints have prevented him from producing a complete and thorough SRN. However, he tried to summarize what has happened in class and wrote it in the shortest time.

“...if there is a problem...is the problem of not having time to write reflection...because student teachers are given many tasks other than teaching classes...time constraints cause me cannot write a thorough self-reflection notes... I can only summarize it in a short time...” (I2/A/106/4).

Furthermore, Fatin, Afiq and Nasser also felt that the workload given by the school to the STs is too much which enabled them to concentrate in writing their SRNs. They just wrote the SRNs that were considered to be adequate by discussing the achievement of learning objectives and strategies of teaching and learning process. According to Nasser,

“...the burdens of the tasks faced by us, as student teachers have caused us unable to concentrate on writing reflections...then I can only write briefly to state whether the objectives are achieved and strategies of P&P (teaching and learning) process...” (I4/N/97/3).

Besides that, Nasser and Najwa felt difficulty in suggesting recommendations to overcome problems is also a problem to them. According to Najwa,

“...possible problem when writing self-reflection notes is...if there was a problem... to suggest ways to solve the problem...it’s not easy...it’s hard...” (I3/NJ/100/4).

In addition, all the participants stated that lack of guidance from the supervising lecturers is also one of the problems faced by them in writing SRNs. They explained, most of the time, they were not guided and unable to discuss with their supervising lecturers when writing the SRNs. They were only able to discuss with their supervising lecturers regarding their reflective writings twice or thrice depend on the number of times of the clinical supervision were conducted. Their supervising lecturers will only check and comment on their SRNs whenever they came to school to supervise and observe them. They felt that two or three times of SRNs’ checking were insufficient for them to receive full guidance from their supervising lecturers in writing meaningful and comprehensive SRNs. According to Afiq,

“...most of the time, we do not have guidance from the supervisors during our reflection...erm...my supervisor only checked on my self-reflection notes during every supervisory session...supervisory sessions only occurred twice in one practicum session...therefore, my supervisor just checked on my self-reflection notes two times only and gave his comments on the supervisory forms...this is not enough to guide me in writing good self-reflection notes...” (I2/A/117/4).

Besides that, Fatin felt that it was quite difficult to determine the aspects to be focused in the SRNs. She believed that the same issues or aspects were usually discussed, such as classroom control, strategies used in teaching, teaching aids used and achievement of learning objectives. However, there were times when it came across her mind to discuss about other aspects but that were the only aspects that occurred in the classroom.

“...during the P&P (teaching and learning) process...erm...we always talk about classroom control, teaching aids, learning objectives...sometimes I wondered also...want to discuss other matters but that was the only matters that happened in the classroom...the recurring issues...” (I1/F/104/4).

Other findings from the content analysis of the reflective writings and interviews

One of the interesting findings about this study is the length of each SRN of the research participants. It was discovered that the length of each participant’s SRN was between 20 to 200 words. It was also found that research participants who wrote longer SRNs were more reflective and demonstrated higher level of reflection as compared to those who just wrote brief or short SRNs.

In addition, the time taken to write a SRN also differed between the research participants. The time taken by the research participants to write a SRN was between 10 minutes to 1 hour. Participants who took a longer time to write a SRN were found to exhibit higher level of reflection and vice versa.

As sum, these findings are in line with the views of Clift, Houston and Pugach (1990) which claimed that time and duration of practice, as well as support are important factors for progressing towards higher level of reflection. Furthermore, the research findings are also supported by studies of Adibah Ismail et al. (2002) which indicated time, duration and length of reflective writings are important factors for promoting a higher level of reflection.

Discussion and conclusion

All research participants considered that feedback and assessment as the main aspect to be focused in the SRNs, followed by lesson implementation, lesson preparation, classroom management, and lastly

professional attributes. The participants should be taught to shift from writing the aspects of feedback and assessment, as well as lesson implementation to the other aspects, such as lesson preparation, classroom management, and professional attributes.

Most SRNs written by the research participants were only at technical level based on the categorization of Van Manen's (1977) levels of reflection. This showed that the STs of semester seven in this study have yet to achieve the level of reflection as expected. However, participants who were interviewed acknowledged the importance of SRNs prepared by them. According to them, the SRN is important for reference purposes and also to help them to plan for further actions. Therefore, they should be encouraged to write SRNs on a regular basis because evidences have shown that writing reflections regularly will form the habit of reflecting (Adibah Ismail et al., 2002; Lakshmi, 2012).

Besides that, the research participants have encountered few problems when writing their SRNs. They did not know how to begin the reflection and were having problems to suggest recommendations for further actions towards the issues or aspects discussed. Actually, these problems could be overcome if the teacher education institutions (in this case the UPSI) provide a specific format as a guideline to be followed by STs to write their reflective writings during TCE.

Most research literature on reflection studies have indicated that guided or systematic reflection is important in facilitating reflective practice among STs (Hatton & Smith, 1995; Hanipah Hussin, 2000; Boon & Wee, 2005; Korthagen & Vasalos, 2005). STs are able to progress to higher level of reflection in their reflective writings after given exposure to the guide for reflecting (Hatton & Smith, 1995; Hanipah Hussin, 2000; Boon & Wee, 2005; Cote Parra, 2012). Moreover, according to Nor Hasniza Ibrahim (2012), collaboration between STs and supervising lecturers, as well as cooperating teachers can help STs to improve their level of reflection to a higher level.

Guidance on how to write reflection should be given comprehensively and completely to STs and teacher educators especially on the focus and way of writing. STs should be guided to focus on writing critical incident, not daily event. This is important to teacher educators because they are often said to encounter difficulties in evaluating the contents of reflective writings due to the vagueness of reflective criterion (Hatton & Smith, 1995).

In addition, written reflections in the form of journal writing is said to be able to improve the skills of reflection among STs. The practices of writing on experience during TCE which are monitored by supervising lecturers can improve the ability of STs to reflect at higher level of reflection. Hence, teacher educators need to understand the rationale of reflection and have basic knowledge of reflection in order to guide STs to enhance their level of reflection from technical to critical. In order to achieve this purpose, the teacher education institutions should provide basic courses on reflection to all supervising lecturers.

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