

Teachers' Attitude toward Journal Writing

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Abstract

Teachers have many tasks that they should do. So, they must be professional in teaching. One of the ways to be professional is to know how to think critically toward their teaching. They should know how to reflect their teaching to help them to know about their strength and weakness in teaching. Based on the observation, some teachers think that journal writing helps them to reflect about their teaching in the classroom. But, the others feel that it is too difficult to conduct. This study tried to explain the complete result of his observation toward the real situation of teachers in their teaching and learning process as well as their attitude toward journal writing and gave some solutions for increasing their ability to think critically toward journal writing. The research design was mixed method where the study collected data by using questionnaire and open-ended questions. The data were about the teachers' attitude toward journal writing, what the teachers can get from journal writing and about whether journal writing influences teachers' professional development or not. The respondents were English teachers in Indonesia, aged 22-38 years old. They were selected purposely by assumption that they were rich of information (Creswell, 2009) about journal writing that they have already conducted. Finally, this study found that journal writing as guideline can be one of ways that teachers do to improve their professionalism. However, it is not easy to be professional because it needs sacrifice.

Keywords: Professional teacher, professionalism, journal writing, motivation, strength, weaknesses, reflection

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Introduction

The global era forces us to be professional in our occupation, including teachers. By developing teachers' professionalism, it is expected that teachers can face the global challenges. However, not all teachers can develop their professionalism due to their teaching place, their awareness as teachers and lack of informations. Being professional means that they should know how to deal with some kind of situations in their teaching process such as how to deal with their students, stakeholders even with the curriculum.

The curriculum of English in Indonesia has continuously changed from time to time. The curriculum or program developers often fail to consider the teachers, students, and the culture in which the new curriculum or practices must be embedded. This change influences the teachers. Without teachers' professional development, it will give a burden to English teachers. Teacher should start over based on the new curriculum. Teachers cannot run the learning process well because they should adjust with the new curriculum. Teachers need to know whether they have adjusted with the new curriculum or not. Teachers' reflection on their teaching and learning is very important to reach it. It will help them to know about their teaching and learning process in the classroom.

Teacher education programs must turn away from focusing on producing proficient practitioners because such practical skills related to instruction and discipline (e.g. Creating and delivering lesson plans, classroom management, and implementation of an assortment of content-specific methods) can be learned over time during their everyday school work with their students. It means that teachers should be more active in the process of teaching including pre-teaching, teaching and post teaching. Teachers can learn from their teaching experience to enrich their teaching skill. While they prepare the better education to the students, they need to know how to develop their skill by mastering their subjects and how to understand their students' personality. To reach these things, teachers need to develop their professionalism. This process reflects upon their competencies, keep them updating information, and develop them further. Teachers have their own roles in the classroom to make the learning process success such as controller, prompter, participant, resource, and tutor (Harmer, 2007b). Moreover, a teacher should be well-prepared, needs to keep the students' records and should be reliable in managing the time allocation for the activities in the classroom (Harmer, 2007a). The usefulness of teacher education program becomes a concern among teacher educators. This issue relates to get teachers prepared for educating the students. The lack qualities of teachers become boomerang for education itself. Teachers should achieve abilities, knowledge, competencies and skills for the effective and efficient learning and teaching process in the classroom. They must know how far their achievement to make them develop their professionalism as teachers.

Continuous professional development will be effective if it is collaborative, uses active learning and delivers to groups of teachers; including periods of practice, coach, follow-up, promote reflective practice, encourage experimentation, and respond to teachers' needs. It means that reflective is one of the ways that teachers need to do if they want to develop their professional. It is related to the statements that reflection has a core value of professionals and plays an important role in professional

training (Brock, 2015). Teachers need to prepare themselves to develop their professionalism. Professional development is ongoing, experiential, collaborative, and connected to and derived from working with students and understanding their culture (Edutopia, 2008). Teachers should be more patient in increasing their ability both in teaching and learning because they must be rich of experience. However, the concept of teacher development is unclear (Evans, 2002). It is still vague among educators because there are not clear parameters for teachers whether they develop or not.

Teachers should be familiar with reflective thinking to develop their professionalism. A variety of approaches is currently used to help teachers develop a critically reflective approach to their teaching, including action research, case studies, ethnography, and journal writing (Calderhead, 1989). A researcher further claimed that teachers' lack of reflective thinking leads to intellectual dependency on those persons who give them clear-cut and definite instructions as to just how to teach this or that (Dewey, 1910). It is supported by other researchers that teacher educators considered pre-service teachers' reflective journal writing in the system often limited to descriptive/ technical reflection, consistent with the literature that the reflection levels in pre-service teachers' writings were primarily descriptive or technical rather than critical/ transformative (Hatton & Smith, 1995).

The purpose of writing in a journal is to have a place to record our observations of what goes on in our own and other teachers' classrooms, write about our discussions, consider teaching ideas, and reflect on our teaching (Gebhard, 2009). Teachers reflect on what they have done in the classroom. Other researchers defined reflective teaching as a recognition, examination, and rumination over the implications of one's beliefs, experiences, attitudes, knowledge, and values as well as the opportunities and constraints provided by the social conditions in which the teacher works (Zeichner & Liston, 1987).

Reflecting on the previous elaboration, this study aimed to investigate the English teachers' attitude toward journal writing. The underlying reasons concerning the study are only a few numbers of English teachers who had applied journal writing in their teaching and learning process. Investigating teachers' attitude toward journal writing gave important information to know the teachers' feeling about journal writing. To achieve this purpose, this study attempted at addressing these questions:

1. What is the teachers' attitude toward journal writing?
2. Does keeping journal writing influence the teachers' professional development?

Scope of study

Relevant to its purpose, the study explored English teachers' attitude toward journal writing. This study also tried to find out whether journal writing can help teachers to develop their professionalism as teachers.

Significance of the study

This study is intended to provide significance for many areas. Basically, this study tried to explore English teachers' attitude toward journal writing. This study contributes to the teaching field by providing relevant statement and opinion to apply

journal writing to all teachers in Indonesia. Finally, result of this study can be used as a useful guidance for both teachers and stakeholders to improve teachers' professional. It is very wise to think that aspect of teachers' attitude toward journal writing can be one of the reasons for stakeholders to give their teachers some training, including journal writing.

Definition of terms

1. Teachers' attitude : Respondents' attitude toward something. It is the impression of positive or negative feelings toward certain issue.
2. Journal writing : a set of notes which written by teachers. It contains the situation in the classroom (approach, technique, method, weakness, strength, evaluation, problem, and so on).

Research Methodology

The study was mixed method where the study collected data by using questionnaire and open-ended questions. The data were about the teachers' attitude toward journal writing, what the teachers can get from journal writing and about whether journal writing influences teachers' professional development or not. The respondents were English teachers in Indonesia, aged 22-38 years old. They were selected purposively by assumption that they were rich of information (Creswell, 2009) about journal writing that they have already conducted. The participants come from different age and teaching experience. The detailed of participants can be seen in the appendix C. This study used questionnaire (see appendix A) and open-ended questions (see appendix B) to collect the data needed as instruments. The questionnaires were design based on the benefits of journal writing (Richards, 1998). The questionnaire was consisted of 20 statements which used a four-Likert scale to indicate their responses of agreement toward journal writing, their attitude and the benefits of journal writing. The last is Open-ended questions were also given to the teachers to support their attitude toward journal writing and to know whether journal writing helps them to develop their teachers' professionalism. The instruments were made in google form and distributed via online from October 19th-21st, 2016. There were 13 responses on 19th October 2016, 6 responses on 20th October 2016 and 1 response on 21st October 2016. Each respondent took 10 until 15 minutes to respond this questionnaire and open-ended questions. The total of 20 respondents' responses was analyzed through percentage of each statement of the questionnaire and the result was analyzed descriptively. Then, the open-ended questions were analyzed descriptively. The goal of this study is to find whether journal writing is effective toward the teachers' professional development and to know the teachers' attitude toward journal writing.

Conclusion

Findings and Discussion

The questionnaires were distributed to the teachers to know their attitude toward journal writing. This is indicated by the students' percentage score got from the first questionnaire as shown in the following table:

No	Statements	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)
1.	I am very delighted to write my reflection on journal writing.	15.0	70.0	10.0	5.0
2.	Journal writing gives me additional motivation to improve my skill.	30	65.0	0	5.0
3	Writing my reflection on journal does not limit my idea in teaching.	30.0	55.0	5.0	10.0

The teachers were mostly very delighted to write their reflection through journal writing. We can see that 70% of teachers agreed with it, 15% of teachers strongly agreed with it, while 10% of teachers disagreed and 5% of them strongly disagreed with it. It means that most of respondents wrote their reflection without any pressure and enjoyed it. However, we cannot deny some of them were not delighted. It can be caused of their less understanding about how to write their reflection well through journal writing (Taczak & Roberston, 2016). When they write down their reflection about their teaching they feel more motivated. It shows from the second statement where 65% of teachers agreed with it, 30% of teachers strongly agreed with it, and 5% of them strongly disagreed with it. It meant that almost teachers believe that journal writing can give them additional motivation to improve their skill in teaching. It is related to another study that one of the benefits of journal writing is to increase the motivation (Farrah, 2012). Besides, the journal writing does not limit their idea in teaching even trigger them to think critically. This support from the third questionnaire which the result is 30 percent of teachers strongly agreed, 55 percent of them agreed with it, while 5 percent of them disagreed with it and 10% strongly disagreed with it.

No	Statements	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)
4.	Journal writing can help me to develop my professionalism as teacher.	30.0	65.0	0	5.0
5.	Journal writing can make me focus to develop my teaching skill.	35.0	55.0	0	10.0
6.	Writing my reflection on journal makes me focus on assessing my students.	35.0	50.0	5.0	10.0

Journal writing is a form of reflection which plays important role in professional development (Brock, 2015; Richards, 1998). It is related to the result of the questionnaire that there are 65% of teachers agreed with it, 30% of teachers strongly agreed with it, and 5% of them strongly disagreed with it. this meant that most of the teachers think that journal writing can help them to develop their professionalism as

teachers. Then, they can be more focus on how to develop their teaching skill because they do not only assess their students but also assess themselves which means that they can use their reflection to develop their performance in teaching. It was supported from the result of study that journal writing can improve skill and knowledge (Farrah, 2012; Nga, n.d.). Besides, teachers also can focus on how to measure their students' performance because they have the record of the activities occurred in the classroom. It showed that there are 35 percent of teachers strongly agreed that writing on journal can make teachers focus on assessing their students, 50 percent of them agreed with it, while 5 percent disagreed and 10% strongly disagreed with it. It indicated that almost teachers can focus on assessing their students through journal writing.

No	Statements	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)
6.	Writing my reflection on journal improves my self-confident in teaching.	30	55.0	5.0	10.0
7	Writing my reflection on journal helps me decide what method that I will use for the next teaching.	45.0	45.0	0	10.0

One of the benefits of journal writing can improve self-confidence (Farrah, 2012). It also felt by almost the participants where we can see the questionnaire number 6 showed that 30 percent of participants strongly agreed that writing on journal can improve their self-confident in teaching, 55 percent of them agreed with it. Though, there were numbers of teachers did not think so. They cannot feel motivated when they conduct journal writing. Although to be successful teachers, they must be confidence to create a great teaching and explanation to the students without any hesitation. Furthermore, writing reflection can help teachers to decide what should they do on their next teaching, such as suitable material, teaching method and so on. It related to the result of study that 45 percent of teachers strongly agreed and 45 percent of them agreed that Writing my reflection on journal helps me decide what method that I will use for the next teaching. Even though, 10% of the teachers strongly disagreed with it.

No	Statements	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)
8	Writing my reflection on journal is effective and efficient to improve my skill.	30.0	55.0	10.0	5.0
10	Writing my reflection on journal can make me realize my strength and weakness in teaching.	55.0	35.0	5.0	5.0

It implied that almost teachers thought that writing their reflection on journal is effective and efficient to improve their skill. We can see number 8 that 30 percent of teachers strongly agreed and 55 percent of them agreed with it. it was almost teachers thought about writing journal reflection as an effective and efficient way to get good skill. while 10 percent of them disagreed with it and 5% strongly disagreed. They

might disagree because of lack insight about writing reflection on journal. Finally, almost teachers thought that writing their reflection on journal can make them realize about their strengths and weakness in teaching. We can see statement number 8 that 55 percent of teachers strongly agreed and 35 percent of them agreed with it. it was amazing to know that only 5 percent of them disagreed and 5% strongly disagreed with it. it meant that almost teachers can be more effective in finding good methods and techniques to teach in the classroom because they can find out their feebleness.

Writing reflection is one of ways to develop the teachers' professionalism. Writing reflection can be on journal writing. Using journal writing to reflect the teachers' teaching experience in the classroom enables to make their professionalism develop because in journal writing, teachers can learn more about their teaching in the classroom, find out their weakness, strength, solve the class problem and many more. Knowing their weakness during teaching process can make them aware for the next teaching because teachers should know and change their mistake in teaching. Whatever the types of journal writing that teacher engage in, it provides useful benefits for teacher (Richards, 1998).

Those who thought that it can help the teachers' professional development because it provides them many benefits in their teaching such as they can focus and be motivated to improve their skill and self-confident, they can realize their strengths and weaknesses and they can easily assess the students through it. a study found that journal writing can grow self-confident and gain trust (Walker, 2006). Some thought that it cannot help the teachers' professional development because it gives them awareness and boredom when they want to teach so it can be burden for them when teaching and wasted more time. It related to the statement that keeping journal writing is wasting time and uninteresting (Burns, 2010). It is a challenge for teachers to do journal writing endlessly because they try to develop their professionalism in many ways. Hence, doing reflection to their teaching experience that written in a journal is one of their ways.

Implication

Finally, this study suggests that journal writing can be one of ways that teachers do to improve their professionalism. They can do better when they have guideline, and then journal writing can be their guideline for the better teaching in the next time. It is not easy to be professional because it needs sacrifice. We need to spend our time by thinking and doing something to develop our teaching professionalism. However, some teachers still cannot apply it because they are lack on insight about how to do reflection through journal writing. So, it is very delighted if the government provides any training for teachers about the implementation of journal writing.

Appendices

Appendix A

Age : _____ years
School : Junior High School/ Senior High School/ Vocational School
Length of Teaching : _____ years _____ months
Gender : M / F

Questionnaire

Please tell us a little bit about yourself by answering the following questions. There are no “right or wrong” answers. We just want to know more about you and your interaction with the students in classroom. Please fill out the questionnaire by checking (√) the appropriate column.

No	Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Dis-agree	Strongly disagree
1.	I am very delighted to write my reflection on journal writing.				
2.	Journal writing can help me to develop my professionalism as teacher.				
3.	Journal writing can make me focus to develop my teaching skill				
4.	Journal writing gives me additional motivation to improve my skill				
5.	Writing my reflection on journal makes me focus on assessing my students.				
6.	Writing my reflection on journal improves my self-confident in teaching.				
7.	Writing my reflection on journal helps me decide what method that I will use for the next teaching.				
8.	Writing my reflection on journal is effective and efficient to improve my skill.				
9.	Writing my reflection on journal does not limit my idea in teaching.				
10.	Writing my reflection on journal can make me realize my strength and weakness in teaching.				

(Created based on Richards J.C. and Ho, 1998)

Appendix B

Open Ended Question

These questions aim to get data about the teachers' professional development. This is not to assess you, as a teacher. So, answer these questions without any pressure from outsider. Thanks a lot for your participation.

Direction :

Answer the questions below!

1. What is the source of my ideas about language teaching?
2. Where am I in my professional development?
3. How am I developing as a language teacher?
4. What are my strengths as a language teacher?
5. What are my limitations at present?
6. Is there any contradiction in my teaching?
7. How can I improve my language teaching?
8. How am I helping my students?
9. What satisfaction does language teaching give me?

(Adopted from Richards J.C. and Ho, 1998)

Appendix C

Data of Respondents

Timestamp	Age	School	Length of teaching	Gender
10/19/2016 0:04:54	24	Senoir high school	1 year	Female
10/19/2016 0:33:30	28	Junior high school	3 years	Female
10/19/2016 0:35:36	28	Junior high school	5 years	Female
10/19/2016 0:36:38	30	Senoir high school	8 years	Male
10/19/2016 5:03:03	22	Vocational high school	1 years	Female
10/19/2016 5:04:36	25	Senoir high school	0 year 6 months	Male
10/19/2016 5:12:32	24	Senoir high school	1 year	Female
10/19/2016 5:17:43	37	Vocational high school	6 years 5 months	Female
10/19/2016 5:19:15	27	Junior high school	4 years 8 months	Female
10/19/2016 5:36:38	37	Junior high school	15 years 11 months	Female
10/19/2016 5:39:37	24	Junior high school	1 years 6 months	Female
10/19/2016 6:00:12	28	Vocational high school	5 months	Male
10/19/2016 10:23:34	28	Junior high school	4 years 3 months	Male
10/20/2016 12:46:07	30	Junior high school	6 years	Female
10/20/2016 13:23:47	28	Elementary school	4 years	Female
10/20/2016 14:09:55	34	Senoir high school	6 years	Male
10/20/2016 19:24:44	26	Junior high school	2 years	Male
10/20/2016 20:08:34	38	Elementary school	16 years	Male
10/20/2016 21:48:51	29	Junior high school	5 years	Male
10/21/2016 1:42:48	35	Elementary school	7 years and 5 months	Female

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