



Addressing the Gap in Reflective Teaching Practices: A Case Study of an English Lecturer in Non-English Major

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Abstract

This study explores the implementation of reflective teaching practices by an English lecturer instructing non-English major students and examines its contributions to professional development and classroom engagement. Reflective teaching involves a continuous cycle of self-assessment, adaptation, and improvement, which enables educators to refine their teaching methodologies to better meet students' needs. Using a qualitative case study approach, this research employed multiple data collection methods, including reflective journals, semi-structured interviews with the lecturer and students, and non-participant classroom observations. The findings indicate that reflective teaching significantly enhances lecturer self-awareness, fostering a more adaptive, student-centered instructional approach. By regularly analyzing his teaching methods and incorporating student feedback, the lecturer was able to create a more engaging and inclusive learning environment. Students reported increased motivation, participation, and comprehension as a result of these pedagogical adjustments. Even though the study found some benefits, it also found some problems that can make it hard to use reflective practices consistently. These problems include a lack of time and too much administrative work that should be done by the lecturer. The research underscores the importance of integrating reflective teaching into professional development programs to promote a culture of continuous learning among educators. Additionally, it highlights the need for further studies involving diverse educational settings to explore the long-term impacts of reflective teaching on both instructors and students. By addressing these gaps, future research can contribute to the development of more effective and sustainable approaches for incorporating reflection into higher education teaching practices.

Keywords: Reflective teaching, teacher professional development, non-English major, students' engagement

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1. Introduction

Professional development is the process of enhancing a teacher's skills, expertise, and ability to improve their teaching strategies for the benefit of their students (Vadivel et al., 2021). It is an ongoing learning process essential for keeping up with the latest developments and changes in the teaching profession. Professional development can take the form of instruction, training, learning, and support activities conducted in both work-based and external environments. Qualified educational professionals lead these activities to improve teachers' professional knowledge, values, and skills. By engaging in professional development, teachers can make well-informed decisions, implement effective teaching strategies, and create a balance between personal, institutional, and national educational goals (Misra, 2018).

Professional development impacts student learning outcomes through three key stages. First, it enhances teachers' knowledge and instructional abilities. Second, improved teaching practices result in more effective classroom instruction. Finally, enhanced instruction leads to better student performance and academic achievement (Çetin & Bayrakçı, 2019). To maximize these benefits, it is essential to provide teachers with appropriate and timely professional growth opportunities. Support from parents, colleagues, school administrators, and ongoing teacher education programs plays a crucial role in sustaining professional development efforts (Mukan et al., 2019). As professional development becomes more widely recognized in education, reflective teaching emerges as a crucial approach to improving teacher effectiveness and student learning outcomes. Reflective teaching is the process of critically analyzing, evaluating, and self-observing one's teaching practices. This method provides educators with a structured framework to enhance their instructional strategies and adapt to students' needs. Reflection involves thinking, assessing, and making sense of past experiences while planning for future improvements. It is a fundamental aspect of self-knowledge and self-regulation, allowing educators to refine their approaches and create more inclusive and effective learning environments. Ayu et al. (2022) said that reflective teaching helps students connect what they



learn in the classroom with what they can use in the real world by using real-life examples, cross-disciplinary connections, and hands-on tasks.

Teachers are encouraged to engage in self-reflection about their instructional methods and apply insights gained to improve their teaching effectiveness. By shifting from merely describing their teaching experiences to critically analyzing them, educators can develop a deeper understanding of their teaching methods, enabling them to make more thoughtful decisions in the classroom (Tajeddin & Aghababazadeh, 2018). One educator who has actively engaged in reflective teaching is Mr. GB, an English lecturer tasked with teaching English to students who are not majoring in the subject. His students, from diverse academic backgrounds such as accounting, public health, and computer science, often viewed English courses as a requirement rather than an opportunity for personal and professional growth. Encouraging active participation from these students posed a significant challenge. However, through continuous reflection on his teaching techniques, student feedback, and experimentation with new instructional methods, Mr. GB developed a professional identity characterized by innovation and ongoing development. His experiences offer valuable insights for educators, researchers, and institutions, illustrating the transformative power of reflective teaching in overcoming instructional challenges, engaging diverse students, and creating meaningful learning environments.

Despite the growing emphasis on reflective teaching, research in this area has predominantly focused on elementary and secondary education, as well as in teacher training, medical education, and language instruction. However, limited research has been conducted on the broader implications of reflective teaching in higher education, particularly in fields such as business, engineering, and non-language disciplines. Many misconceptions persist among both students and educators regarding the role of reflective teaching in these contexts (Chan & Lee, 2021). According to Bandura (1986), Mann, Gordon and MacLeod (2009), and Tsingos et al. (2014) in Chan & Lee (2021), reflective practices help students connect new knowledge to prior learning, integrate classroom learning with real-world practice, enhance self-



awareness, and identify their strengths and areas for improvement. Instructors and students alike benefit from reflective teaching as it facilitates the identification of learning needs and the continuous refinement of instructional methods.

English is considered an essential subject in non-English departments in higher education. Proficiency in the four language skills—speaking, listening, reading, and writing—is crucial for students to effectively communicate in academic and professional settings. However, English courses in non-English departments often carry limited credit hours (typically two to four credits), which restricts students' opportunities to develop their language skills fully (Sinap et al., 2021). Furthermore, non-English major students face unique challenges in learning English, including a lack of motivation, perceived irrelevance to their primary academic goals, and varying levels of prior exposure to the language. Many students initially struggle to engage in language courses because they do not see their direct application to their fields of study. However, their academic backgrounds may shape different levels of motivation and interest in English learning.

Given these challenges, it is crucial for English lecturers to understand the learning techniques used by non-English major students and adapt their teaching methods accordingly. Familiarity with students' learning preferences enables lecturers to design instructional strategies that enhance student engagement and improve language acquisition. By incorporating reflective teaching practices, educators can refine their approaches, making English instruction more relevant and accessible to students from diverse academic disciplines. This study aims to explore the impact of reflective teaching on the professional development of English lecturers teaching non-English major students in higher education. Additionally, it investigates how reflective practices contribute to creating an inclusive and engaging learning environment that fosters student success.

2. Method

2.1 Design



This study used a case study design, which made it possible to investigate a particular event, situation, or social condition and to provide insight into the processes that explained how a particular event or situation occurred. Case study research was recognized as a means of thoroughly examining a phenomenon (Patnaik & Pandey, 2019). The case study aimed to comprehend the participant's reflective teaching practices, the difficulties he encountered, and the ways in which these practices affected his development as a professional. This study aimed to give a thorough insight of the specific topic under study, not to generalize the findings to other contexts. Because the case study was qualitative in nature, it allowed the researcher to examine the lecturer's experiences, viewpoints, and behaviors in a natural environment and provide insights that could guide future research or practice in related situations.

2.2 Subject or Participant

In a qualitative study, a relatively small and intentionally chosen sample maybe used (Miles & Huberman, 2020). Purposive sampling was employed to choose participants who were most likely to provide relevant and valuable information (Campbell et al., 2020). The goal was to capture a rich and varied set of experiences, ensuring that the participant could provide detailed insights into the impact of reflective teaching on his professional development. The participant of this study, referred to by the pseudonym Mr. GB, is a dedicated English lecturer at a private university since 2014. This English lecturer was selected as a participant by the researcher due to his special position teaching English in a non-English department, which necessitates a high degree of flexibility and knowledge. For students whose main concentration is not language but rather other subjects like science, business, or engineering, he is responsible for adapting English instruction. His ability to bridge the gap between English language education and the practical requirements of these students makes him a very interesting participant for this study.

Mr. GB teaches English to students from three non-English areas at his university: information technology, public health, and economics. English is a required subject in the first and second semesters of these courses, which are intended to give students the language



proficiency they need for their academic and professional endeavors. He must modify his teaching strategies to accommodate the various demands of students from these many academic fields as part of his job, which demonstrates his flexibility and adaptability as an educator. Using a random sample technique to guarantee objectivity and equitable representation from the population, the researcher selected one participant from each of the five classes to guarantee a thorough and varied viewpoint in this study. This method eliminated any potential bias in the selection process by giving each student in the five classes an equal chance of being selected as a participant. In order to capture a range of experiences and viewpoints, random sampling guarantees that the participants are representative of the overall student population. By reducing the impact of situational or personal factors that could influence participant selection, this method also improves the validity and reliability of the research findings. As a result, the insights gathered are more likely to reflect the general experiences of students enrolled in English courses across non-English departments.

2.3 Data Collection Techniques

To gather thorough information on reflective teaching techniques, the study used a methodical and multi-method approach, concentrating on reflective journal analysis, interviews, and classroom observations. One of the important sources of information was the lecturer Mr. GB's reflective journal, which included details on his professional growth, teaching difficulties, and strategies. Systematic analysis of the journal revealed recurring themes and critical learning moments that highlighted the evolution of his reflective practices. Semi-structured interviews with Mr. GB and a randomly selected group of five students complemented the journal data, providing diverse perspectives on the impact of reflective teaching. The lecturer's interview emphasized his experiences with reflection, challenges faced, and professional growth, while student interviews explored how these practices contributed their engagement and learning outcomes. Classroom observations further enriched the data by allowing real-time analysis of the implementation of reflective teaching methods. Non-participant observations, guided by a structured checklist, captured student engagement, the



use of student-centered and project-based learning strategies, and the overall dynamics between the lecturer and students. Detailed field notes documented interactions, teaching techniques, and the application of interdisciplinary approaches. Together, these methods provided a holistic understanding of reflective teaching practices, offering valuable insights into their effectiveness in fostering student engagement and enhancing the lecturer's professional development.

2.4 Data Analysis Techniques

The data analysis procedure in this study followed a qualitative approach aimed at interpreting and making sense of the data collected through reflective journals, interviews, and classroom observations. The goal of the analysis was to identify patterns, themes, and insights regarding the implementation of reflective teaching and its impact on the lecturer's professional development. The first step in the analysis involved becoming thoroughly familiar with the data. This was achieved by transcribing the audio-recorded interviews and reviewing the observational notes. The researcher carefully read the reflective journals, interview transcripts, and observation notes multiple times to gain an in-depth understanding of the content and context of the data. During this stage, preliminary insights and patterns were noted. After familiarization, the next step was coding the data. Thematic coding was used to identify key concepts and recurring patterns in the data. Each segment of the interview transcripts and observation notes was assigned a code representing an important theme or idea related to reflective teaching practices, challenges, or impacts on student engagement. Once the data were coded, the researcher employed thematic analysis to identify, analyze, and report patterns within the data. The aim of a thematic analysis is to recognize themes, which are patterns in the data that are significant or intriguing and utilize these themes to explore the research or make a statement about a problem. This goes beyond just summarizing the data; a strong thematic analysis interprets and gives meaning to it (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). This process involved organizing the codes into overarching themes that captured the key elements of reflective teaching and its effects.



3. Findings and Discussion

This part presented the findings of the study; the data were collected through reflective journals, interviews with the lecturer and five students, as well as classroom observations. The findings were organized into key themes that emerged during the data analysis, providing a detailed account of how reflective teaching practices were implemented, the challenges faced by the lecturer, and the responses of the students.

Table 1 Key Findings

| Category | Key Findings | Supporting Conversation/Observation |
|--|---|---|
| Reflective Teaching Outcomes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enhanced adaptability in teaching strategies. - Improved student engagement and participation. - Adoption of student-centered learning approaches. - Integration of interactive and project-based learning. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>"After reflecting, I changed my teaching strategy, the result was that they were much more engaged, and their understanding of the material increased."</i> - <i>"Students were more engaged during the group project but struggled to present confidently."</i> |
| Contribution to Professional Development | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increased self-awareness in teaching practices. - Higher confidence in instructional strategies. - Greater ability to innovate and experiment with teaching methods. - Commitment to continuous learning and improvement. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>"Through reflection, I can identify my strengths and weaknesses as a teacher. It also helps me improve my teaching skills and adapt more effective strategies based on students' needs."</i> - <i>"By continually reflecting on my practice, I have become more competent and able to face the challenges of teaching."</i> |
| Challenges Identified | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Time constraints due to multiple faculty responsibilities. - Lack of immediate feedback and measurable outcomes. - Institutional limitations, including rigid curriculum structures and limited professional development opportunities. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>"One of the main challenges is usually time, sufficient time to carry out in-depth reflection, amidst other responsibilities as a lecturer, such as preparing materials and administration."</i> - <i>"Some students are more comfortable with traditional lectures, while others prefer hands-on activities."</i> - <i>"Some students seemed hesitant to fully participate in reflective activities, suggesting a need for more strategies to encourage broader involvement."</i> |



3.1 Reflective Teaching as a Tool for Professional Development

From the interview data, the lecturer was able to innovate and adapt his teaching methods by consistently reflecting on classroom experiences. Reflective teaching plays a crucial role in professional development, enabling educators to assess and improve their instructional strategies. Through continuous reflection, teachers can identify areas of strength and weakness, refine their teaching methodologies, and adapt to students' evolving needs. In this study, the English lecturer teaching non-English major students was able to modify his teaching strategies by integrating project-based learning, interdisciplinary examples, and student-centered activities. These adaptations made the lessons more relevant and practical, effectively bridging the gap between English instruction and students' primary academic disciplines.

The process of self-reflection allowed the lecturer to develop greater self-awareness, adaptability, and confidence in his teaching abilities. By critically assessing his instructional approaches, he realized that he relied too heavily on lecture-based teaching, which limited student engagement. This realization led him to incorporate more interactive strategies that encouraged student participation. This process aligns with Schon (1983), which highlights the role of reflection in helping professionals adapt their practices to meet new challenges. Similarly, Dewey (1933) emphasizes that reflection allows educators to bridge past experiences with future improvements, fostering growth in their teaching identity.

Reflective teaching also reinforced the lecturer's role as a lifelong learner. Through reflection, he recognized the need to enhance his digital literacy and student engagement strategies. This self-awareness encouraged him to seek professional development opportunities, such as attending workshops and integrating innovative teaching techniques into his lessons. Additionally, by reflecting on his personal experiences as a student, he developed an empathetic and supportive teaching style that balanced academic rigor with student-centered learning. This approach helped him create a more inclusive and engaging learning environment while aligning his teaching philosophy with his professional role.



Reflective journals provided detailed evidence of the lecturer's ongoing professional growth. These journals highlighted his willingness to experiment with different pedagogical approaches, such as using visual aids and practical exercises, to address diverse learning styles. Classroom observations further reinforced these findings, capturing real-time evidence of how reflective teaching influenced his instructional practices. During one observed session, he introduced a project-based activity where students created posters related to their academic fields. This activity encouraged students to actively engage with the content while applying their knowledge in a practical, interdisciplinary context. This iterative process of reflection, adaptation, and evaluation enabled the lecturer to continuously refine his teaching strategies and enhance his professional development.

3.2 Enhancing Student Engagement Through Reflective Teaching

Beyond professional growth, reflective teaching significantly enhances student engagement. By implementing interactive and contextualized learning strategies, the lecturer was able to transform student perceptions of English as a secondary subject and increase their motivation to participate actively in class. Student interviews revealed a positive perception of reflective teaching practices, particularly in how they contributed to a more dynamic and participatory classroom environment. Many students noted that the lecturer's willingness to adjust his teaching based on their feedback made them feel more valued and engaged. Activities such as group discussions, real-world case studies, and interdisciplinary examples helped students grasp complex concepts more effectively. The incorporation of student feedback into lesson planning created a two-way communication channel, reinforcing the importance of student-centered learning.

Classroom observations provided further evidence of how reflective teaching fostered student engagement. The lecturer's shift from passive lecture-based methods to interactive group discussions encouraged critical thinking, collaboration, and peer learning. One notable adaptation was the introduction of project-based learning, which allowed students to apply their



English language skills within their academic disciplines. This approach not only improved student motivation but also demonstrated the lecturer's ability to integrate reflective insights into effective teaching strategies. Another significant observation was the lecturer's ability to adapt his teaching methods in real time based on student feedback. For example, when students displayed confusion or disengagement, he slowed down the lesson, provided additional explanations, and incorporated multimedia resources to make the content more accessible. This ability to adjust teaching strategies during class aligns with Schon (1983), which emphasizes reflection-in-action as a means of addressing immediate challenges. The findings also suggest that reflective teaching contributed to a more positive classroom atmosphere. The lecturer's openness to feedback fostered a sense of mutual respect and inclusivity, making students feel more comfortable asking questions, seeking clarification, and actively participating in discussions. By responding to student needs and refining his instructional methods accordingly, the lecturer not only enhanced student engagement but also reinforced the idea of learning as a collaborative process.

3.3 Challenges and Future Considerations in Implementing Reflective Teaching

Despite its many benefits, implementing reflective teaching practices comes with challenges. One of the most significant obstacles is time constraints. Faculty members in higher education often juggle multiple responsibilities, including teaching, grading, research, and administrative duties. Finding the time for in-depth reflection after each lesson can be difficult, leading many educators to engage in only surface-level reflection or neglect the practice altogether. A practical strategy to address this challenge is scheduling structured reflection sessions at the end of each week rather than after every class. Another challenge is the lack of immediate feedback and measurable outcomes. Unlike traditional assessments, which provide clear indicators of student progress, the impact of reflective teaching is often subtle and long-term. Lecturer may struggle to determine whether his reflective practices are truly leading to improved student learning. To address this issue, educators can integrate student feedback



mechanisms, such as surveys or informal discussions, to assess the effectiveness of their adaptations. Additionally, engaging in peer discussions and collaborative reflection with colleagues can help validate self-assessments and improve instructional strategies.

Emotional and psychological barriers also play a role in the challenges of reflective teaching. Deep self-examination may lead to self-criticism or feelings of inadequacy, particularly when educators struggle to find immediate solutions to persistent challenges. This can create frustration or resistance to engaging in reflective practices. To mitigate this, educators should adopt a growth mindset, viewing reflection as an opportunity for continuous improvement rather than a critique of their abilities. Support from mentoring programs, professional development workshops, and peer networks can also help educators navigate these emotional challenges. In addition to individual barriers, institutional limitations can hinder the effectiveness of reflective teaching. Many educators face rigid curriculum structures that make it difficult to adapt their teaching strategies based on reflection. Without institutional support, professional development opportunities, or access to resources, faculty may struggle to implement meaningful reflective practices. To address this issue, universities and academic institutions should embed reflective teaching into faculty development programs, provide structured reflection activities, and cultivate a culture where reflective teaching is encouraged and valued.

Moving forward, further research should explore the long-term effects of reflective teaching across different academic disciplines. While much of the existing research focuses on language education, investigating its impact on fields such as business, engineering, and the sciences could provide valuable insights into its broader applicability. Additionally, longitudinal studies could assess the sustained benefits of reflective teaching for both educators and students, offering deeper insights into best practices for implementing reflective teaching at various levels of higher education. Ultimately, reflective teaching proves to be a powerful tool for professional growth, improved instructional strategies, and enhanced student engagement. By fostering a culture of self-assessment and continuous adaptation, educators



can create more effective and inclusive learning environments. With institutional support and structured reflection opportunities, reflective teaching can become an integral part of higher education, benefiting both teachers and students in the long run.

4. Conclusion

The findings of this study highlight the critical role of reflective teaching in enhancing both professional development and student engagement in higher education. Through consistent self-assessment and adaptation, the lecturer was able to refine his teaching strategies, making them more student-centered, interactive, and relevant to non-English major students. Reflective teaching helped students connect English lessons to their main subjects by using project-based learning, examples from different subjects, and real-life examples. This made students more interested and motivated to participate. From a professional development perspective, reflective practice fostered greater self-awareness, adaptability, and confidence in the lecturer's teaching abilities. The continuous process of evaluating classroom experiences allowed him to identify areas for improvement, experiment with new instructional approaches, and align his teaching philosophy with student needs. This iterative process of reflection and adaptation not only enhanced instructional effectiveness but also reinforced the lecturer's identity as a lifelong learner, committed to ongoing professional growth.

The study also underscores the positive impact of reflective teaching on student engagement. By integrating student feedback into lesson planning, incorporating group discussions, and implementing hands-on learning activities, the lecturer was able to create a more inclusive and dynamic learning environment. Students responded positively to these strategies, demonstrating increased participation, motivation, and a stronger connection between language learning and their respective fields of study. Despite its benefits, reflective teaching presents challenges, including time constraints, lack of immediate feedback, and emotional barriers. The study acknowledges that many educators struggle to balance reflective practice with other professional responsibilities. Additionally, institutional limitations, such as rigid curriculum structures, can hinder the full integration of reflective teaching. Addressing



these challenges requires institutional support, structured reflection opportunities, and a culture that values continuous professional development.

Moving forward, further research should explore the long-term effects of reflective teaching across diverse academic disciplines and cultural contexts. By investigating how reflective practices influence different fields, educators can develop more effective and widely applicable strategies for integrating self-reflection into teaching. Additionally, longitudinal studies can provide deeper insights into the sustained impact of reflective teaching on both educators and students. Ultimately, this study reaffirms that reflective teaching is a powerful tool for professional growth, improved instructional methods, and enhanced student engagement. By fostering a mindset of continuous learning, adaptability, and responsiveness to student needs, educators can create more effective, inclusive, and dynamic learning environments that benefit both teachers and students in higher education.

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