Teaching with Intention: The Perceived Benefits of Reflective Teaching Journals in TESOL Teacher Training

Cassandra Crystal Sanders

A project submitted to the faculty of Brigham Young University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

Mark W. Tanner, Chair
Benjamin L. McMurry
Teresa R. Bell

Department of Linguistics and English Language
Brigham Young University

Copyright © 2017 Cassandra Crystal Sanders
All Rights Reserved
ABSTRACT

Teaching with Intention: The Perceived Benefits of Reflective Teaching Journals in TESOL Teacher Training

Cassandra Crystal Sanders
Department of Linguistics and English Language, BYU
Master of Arts

Reflective teaching journals are a common assignment in pre-service teacher coursework (Campoy, 2010). Previous studies have shown that reflective teachers are more aware of their teaching decisions and improve their teaching abilities (Afshar, 2015; Johnson & Golombek, 1992; Pellerin & Paukner Nogués, 2015). Teacher educators can employ reflective journal assignments to help pre-service teachers become reflective practitioners. This study is a descriptive case study of the use of reflective journals in a TESOL teaching practicum for pre-service teachers. Through qualitative data collection methods of surveys, observations, focus groups, and interviews, thirteen pre-service teachers related their experiences with these reflective teaching journals. The data were analyzed to identify the benefits and constraints, as perceived by the pre-service teachers, in writing reflective teaching journals. The results showed that pre-service teachers identified teacher improvement, retrospection, and self-awareness in the classroom as benefits of using reflective teaching journals. On the other hand, time and discouragement were constraints recognized by the pre-service teachers. Incorporating reflective journals in pre-service teacher coursework may promote a reflective disposition and practice that can help pre-service teachers be better prepared for in-service teaching practice. Teacher educators should carefully consider the structure of the reflective assignments in order to help teachers fully engage in this practice.

Key words: TESOL, reflective journals, pre-service teachers, teacher training
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would first like to thank my project advisor Dr. Mark Tanner of the Linguistics and English Language Department at Brigham Young University. Dr. Tanner provided valuable guidance, encouragement, and motivation to help me successfully complete this research project. He consistently allowed this paper to be my own work, but steered me in the right the direction that helped me reach this point. I would also like to thank my committee members who provided advice and reassurance throughout this project: Dr. Benjamin McMurry and Dr. Teresa Bell. Without their passionate participation and input, the research, analysis, and writing of this project could not have been successfully conducted. I would also like to acknowledge Dr. Grant Eckstein of the Linguistics and English Language Department at Brigham Young University for allowing me to perform my research in his LING 611 course. I am grateful indebted to him for his allowing me to come into his class and work with his students. To the students of LING 611, thank you for willingly taking part in this research. I am very grateful to my parents and siblings who kept me sane throughout this project. Finally, I am most grateful to my husband, Christian, for providing me with unfailing support and continuous encouragement throughout my years of study and through the process of researching and writing this project. I could not have done this without you.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TITLE PAGE</td>
<td>i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGMENTS</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TABLE OF CONTENTS</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PREFACE</td>
<td>vi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF TABLES</td>
<td>vii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF FIGURES</td>
<td>viii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review of Literature</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflection as Research</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflection as a Collaborative Task</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflection and Professional Development</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective Reflection in Pre-service Teacher Education</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflective assignments</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching reflection</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rationale for the Project</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Design</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Context &amp; Participants</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignment Overview</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Collection &amp; Instruments</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Implementation</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analysis</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Results</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Question 1</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Improvement</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retrospection</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awareness</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Question 2</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discouragement</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section</td>
<td>Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Question 3</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparative change in benefits</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Improvement</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retrospection</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awareness</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparative change in constraints</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discouragement</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insights from the Interview and Focus Group</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pedagogical Implications</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Training Programs</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-service and In-service Teachers</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limitations</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future Research</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REFERENCES</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX A</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX B</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX C</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX D</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This project was written in partial fulfillment of the MA TESOL degree at Brigham Young University. As such, it was written in such a way that it could be submitted as a manuscript to a journal. The *Journal of Teacher Education* is the journal that was selected in part because it has published several studies that have dealt with improving teacher training. Those who read the *Journal of Teacher Education* may find this study of interest in light of the reflective teaching research that has been done previously.

The length requirements stated by the journal indicate that submitted manuscripts must be less than 10,000 words, which is why the length of this manuscript is shorter in comparison to other traditional manuscripts. It is a goal of the Department of Linguistics and English Language to help students in the MA TESOL program publish their work in academic journals, hence another reason for the shorter length.

Other possible publication venues for this thesis manuscript include *TESOL Quarterly* because of its focus on TESOL specific research, which this study is, and *Language Teaching Research* which focuses on research specific to language teaching and the language classroom.
LIST OF TABLES

1. Themes that Emerged as Benefits from the Questionnaire Responses..............................23
2. Example Responses from the Questionnaires in Regards to Teacher Improvement........24
3. Example Responses from the Questionnaires in Regards to Retrospection...............25
4. Example Responses from the Questionnaires in Regards to Awareness......................27
5. Themes that Emerged as Constraints from the Questionnaire Responses......................28
6. Example Responses from the Questionnaires in Regards to Time................................29
7. Example Responses from the Questionnaires in Regards to Discouragement...............30
8. Comments from Participants Regarding Peer Discussion Groups.............................37
LIST OF FIGURES

1. Gibbs reflective cycle, 1988................................................................. 9
2. Reflective teaching cycle for LING 611.............................................. 17
3. Reflective period............................................................................... 19
4. Frequency of themes commenting on the benefits of reflective journals ......................................................... 24
5. Frequency of themes commenting on the constraints of reflective journals.............................................................. 29
6. Comparison of perceived benefits of reflective journals from initial survey to final survey.................................. 32
7. Comparison of perceived constraints of reflective journals from the initial survey to the final survey.............. 34
Introduction

"Failing to reflect on teaching decisions leads to teaching by imitation rather than intentionality." (Danielson, 2009, p. 1)

When I entered the field of teaching, I was no stranger to the classroom. Having spent seven years in primary school, six years in secondary school, and five years achieving my undergraduate degree, I was keenly familiar with how a class should run, my role as a student, and what I could expect from my teachers. I had gone through years of "apprenticeship of observation" as a student myself and had pre-established ideas of what teachers do (Danielson, 2009, p. 1). As a child, I would innocently “play teacher” with my friends and siblings, imitating the actions of my own teachers: writing on the chalkboard, passing out papers, and assigning grades. Little did I know that teaching was much more complex than this. Danielson (2009) described students as being able to "sense what teachers do, but [they] have no grasp of why they do it" (p. 1).

Though this statement may seem slightly unsettling, more troubling is the notion that teachers, though present physically in the classroom, may not be aware of their teaching decisions, motivation, or lesson success (Dajani 2015; Farrell, 2016; Wu, 2016). Richards & Lockhart (1994) supported this argument when they said, "Much of what happens in teaching is unknown to the teacher” (p. 3). This phenomenon could largely be due to teachers performing teacher “acts” they observed as students in the classroom. Simpson, Jackson, and Aycock (2005) agreed saying that teachers “should not--simply implement the plans of others; we have to think for ourselves” (p. 7). Teaching by imitation only, produces teachers who work as machines, “churning out exercise after exercise for the students to do” (Varaprasad, 2010). Varaprasad
interviewed Farrell about his study of reflective practitioners. In the interview Farrell noted that these teachers “are akin to a ringmaster in a circus who drives the show at a pace he thinks is right. Such teachers are focused on finishing their lesson plans for the day without any concern about whether learning is really taking place.” (p. 3)

Teachers caught in such routine snares will eventually face burnout, feelings of insecurity, and even a desire to leave the profession soon after entering it (Farrell, 2016; Varaprasad, 2010). Like my childhood teaching game, these teachers know the actions of teaching, but may not understand the motivation behind them or the objectives of such activities. Simply put, “too many classroom actions and strategies are applied routinely, without conscious thought” (Dajani, 2015, p. 119).

Pre- and in-service teacher training programs grapple with finding the best methods for preparing teachers for what lies ahead. Coursework for teachers often focuses on learning and applying teaching techniques, methods, and procedures supplying pre-service teachers with a list of “shoulds” and “should nots.” In addition, pre-service teachers may take classes that expound upon their knowledge of the subject matter they will teach. However, it has been suggested that “there is more to high-quality teaching than subject-matter knowledge and possession of ‘best practices’” (Amobi, 2006, p. 23). Richards and Lockhart (1994) observed that within second language teacher training, there should be a movement away from top-down education where pre-service teachers are taught such methodologies and traditions. Teacher educators should instead use “an approach that seeks to understand teaching in its own terms” (p. ix). Richards and Lockhart (1994) argued that this variety of teacher training begins by looking inward to “[explore] with teachers what they do and why they do it” (p. ix). This practice is commonly referred to as reflective teaching.
The purpose of this study was to analyze the implementation of a reflective teaching assignment in a university graduate-level course designed to train Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL). This reflective teaching assignment was in the form of journal entries. Surveys, focus groups, and interviews were used in an effort to ascertain whether or not this particular assignment was meeting its intended purpose for effective reflection and if the students were reaping the rich benefits described in previous literature from doing reflective teaching.

Review of Literature

ESL teachers, both veteran and pre-service, are often told about the value of reflective teaching. It is important to recognize influential contributors to this field and the concept of reflection, which dates back much further. Reflection has roots in critical thinking and metacognitive awareness. Reflection or reflective thinking was defined by Dewey (1910) as “a state of perplexity, hesitation, doubt; and an act of search or investigation directed toward bringing to light further facts which serve to corroborate or to nullify the suggested belief” (p. 9). In layman’s terms, reflection is the experience of thinking back and making sense of previous actions or events. These thought processes may appear simplistic and even natural, but true reflection involves more than meets the eye and can be mentally taxing and time consuming. In his book How We Think, Dewey (1910) said, “Reflective thinking is always more or less troublesome because...it involves willingness to endure a condition of mental unrest” (p. 13). This mental unrest is the activity of looking back on an experience, problem, or question and allowing “judgment [to be] suspended during further inquiry” (Dewey, 1910, p. 13). Reflection allows individuals to explore solutions and answers that may not be immediately obvious, but will become apparent with time and patience. Such reflection leads to metacognition (Duffy,
Miller, Parsons, & Meloth, 2009). Metacognition is “awareness or analysis of one's own learning or thinking processes” (Metacognition, n.d.) and is useful in helping teachers understand their teaching decisions. Duffy et al. (2009) suggested that the best teachers are those who employ routines, activities, and procedures “that work,” but who also “engage in complex mental activity that helps them decide how to alter [those] routines and procedures when necessary” (p. 241). These researchers suggest that metacognitive awareness is the paragon for successful teachers and that “as teacher educators, we [should be] particularly interested in how to develop teacher metacognitive thought” (Duffy et al., 2009, p. 241).

Reflective teaching has been referred to as a “bandwagon” method, or a popular trend, that has been interpreted and implemented in a variety of ways (Zeichner & Liston, 2014, p. 8). Amobi (2006) argued that the implementation of reflection is perceived differently and “while there is an agreement on the need for reflection in teaching, what reflection looks like in action is ‘in the eye of the beholder’” (p. 26). The ambiguity of reflection then makes it difficult to educate teachers on this practice. It is not uncommon for pre-service teachers to be given reflective teaching assignments, such as logs, journals, or self-analysis of video recordings. Pre-service teachers complete these assignments for the purpose of receiving a grade; however, teacher educators need to be engaging pre-service teachers in meaningful reflection that fosters the development of reflective habits that will be career-long (Hine, 2013). In order to have true reflection take place in teacher education programs, teacher educators must move away from the bandwagon frame of mind and recognize the verifiable need for reflection, and more importantly, instill a reflective disposition within pre-service teachers early on in their teaching careers. The literature review will note a few ways and reasons previous research has provided for the use of reflection in pre-service teacher education. It will also highlight the findings of
Reflection as Research

As stated before, reflection is not as simple as thinking back on an experience. It is a deep and meaningful process. In Murray’s (2015) study of mathematics teachers performing reflection, she supported this idea by saying, "Reflection is more than merely thinking about one’s instruction. It is a purposeful act that begins with a problem, context, or episode, defines/redefines the problem, seeks possible solutions, experiments with solutions, and finally evaluates the results" (p. 23).

This kind of cyclical thinking is evident as well in the pattern of research. It begins with a problem, seeks to define it, understand it, and later attempts to find a solution. While the focus of this research does not have the benefits of action research as its focus, it is important to note that reflection can be classified as a type of research on a smaller scale. Pellerin and Paukner Nogués (2015) studied six Chilean teachers performing small-scale action research in their classrooms. They found that teachers engaged in the action research project subsequently involved those teachers in critical reflection and inquiry (p. 46). Pellerin and Paukner Nogués (2015) claimed that action research and reflection were often regarded as synonymous as “both concepts aim[ed] to improve practice and to impact students’ learning process and motivation” (p. 48). In addition, all the teachers involved in the study recognized the importance of “[providing] pre-service teachers with knowledge and situated practice” (p. 57) with reflection. By doing so, educational systems would improve because teachers would think for themselves rather than depend on the beliefs and methods of former teachers. Pellerin and Paukner Nogués (2015) concluded that it is "crucial to engage pre-service teachers in the reflection and inquiry process at some point in their
teacher training” and that such training would be start of building reflective practitioners (p. 57).

With research, even small-scale research, come action and change. Reflective teaching is an accessible practice that promotes change in the classroom. Pellerin and Paukner Nogués (2015) found that engaging teachers in classroom research and reflection “will contribute to teachers’ understanding that the act of teaching embodies change” (p. 58). Hine (2013) supports the claims made by Pellerin and Paukner Nogués (2015) in his analysis of teacher education programs and their initiatives in implementing classroom research. He notes that “providing teachers with the necessary skills [and] knowledge” of reflective teaching “will...effect positive changes concerning the educative goals of the learning community” (p. 153).

In order to experience change, teachers must be willing and able to perform small-scale research in their classrooms. Unfortunately, classroom research is inhibited by teachers' own perceived inabilities for conducting any form of classroom research. Kaplan (1998) said that,

“An additional and not insubstantial part of [teachers’ unwillingness] lies in teachers’ fear of research, which is not something most teachers are trained to do--or for that matter, paid to do. Research is something done by strange and mysterious people (who hold doctorates) in strange and mysterious places (labs?); the teachers’ role is to receive wisdom from these superior beings…In sum, many teachers do not see their work as research driven” (p. 16, parentheses in original).

This same idea is further supported by Williams (2011) in his book about qualitative inquiry. He suggested that the methods qualitative researchers use can be applied and employed by other personnel in the academic world such as teachers and administrators. He argued that teachers are in an optimal position for gathering information about their teaching practices,
instructional choices, and students, which can then in turn help teachers improve the education field with new ideas, methods, and self-developed theories (Williams, 2011).

**Reflection as a Collaborative Task**

In a study of three novice ESL teachers, Farrell (2016) incorporated reflective teaching for the purpose of engaging novice teachers in using reflection to confront difficult challenges. Farrell notes that “TESOL as a profession must ask itself what can be done to help these struggling novice ESL teachers... *swim* rather than *sink*” (p. 9). In his research, he met with three novice ESL teachers weekly to participate in open-ended discussions that focused on the participants’ work. These teachers were grouped together for the purpose of reflecting on and supporting one another with difficulties that arose during their first semester of teaching. Over the course of 12 weeks, the teachers expressed concerns of not feeling welcomed by more experienced teachers, being unprepared for the classroom, and not being guided by a mentor. However, their regular and weekly small group meetings provided an opportunity for these teachers to rely on one another. This “ESL teacher reflection group” allowed these new teachers “to regularly and systematically reflect on their first semester experiences in a supportive, collegial environment” (Farrell, 2016, p. 9). An important aspect of Farrell's study was the use of collaboration as a means of promoting teacher reflection. The participants in his study indicated that they found enjoyment and comfort in listening to others in their same situation. Collaboration was an effective addition to reflection as it provided the teachers with feedback and friendship.

Similarly, a group of mathematics teachers implemented the Collaborative Reflective Teaching Cycle (CRTC) created by Murray (2015) for the purpose of improving pedagogical
reflection. The CRTC is a collaborative teaching cycle with three phases: planning, teaching, and reflecting. This reflection was defined as the activity "in which teachers consider how teaching practices affect students’ learning and how they can enhance learning experiences" with the desired goal of this reflection being to continuously improve teaching practices (Murray, 2015, p. 25).

Murray (2015) indicates that CRTC provided these teachers the opportunity to plan a lesson, execute the lesson, then reflect on the successes and failures of that lesson. In this important third step, reflection, teachers engage in critical introspection where they think about the types of tasks and strategies they used in class and which ones were more successful. Gallego (2014) identified this process as “a potential avenue for raising awareness” in the classroom (p. 97).

CRTC also goes further than just reflection. It also includes collaboration as an essential element of this teaching cycle. Teachers participating in CRTC regularly met with other teachers to share experiences and develop ideas for better and new pedagogical practices (Murray, 2015, p. 25). Through means of collaboration, teachers were better equipped and more willing to “realize changes in their practice” that needed to take place (p. 25). Dajani (2015) indicated that reflection opens doors for teacher cooperation and collaboration. “It helps them to build bridges of collegial cooperation with their colleagues” which leads to “the creation of learning communities in schools” (p. 119). Connecting and talking with other teachers about classroom experiences can bring insight and a breadth of strategies that encourage professional development (Pellerin & Paukner Nogués, 2015).

An interesting and common component of the CRTC was the use of a cycle to guide the teachers through the reflective experience. Other than CRTC, another well-known reflective
cycle was created by Gibbs (1988). This cycle provides a basis for the type of thought processes a teacher should be encouraged to develop during reflection (Figure 1). Though this cycle has been used in a variety of fields, it is especially relevant when describing reflective teaching. As seen in CRTC, each step of the reflective cycle encourages thoughtful thinking in all the phases of an activity. This cycle attempts to articulate what teachers should be doing as they confront issues, problems, or dilemmas in their classroom. Each of the stages, or stopping points, is designed to help the teacher use the guiding questions to move systematically through the process (Ghaye, 2011).

![Gibbs Reflective Cycle](image)

**Figure 1.** Gibbs reflective cycle, 1988.

**Reflection and Professional Development**

Many schools, universities, and private institutions, require some form of professional development for their teachers, be it conferences, additional coursework, or license renewal.
However, reflective teaching can also be considered as a respectable, useful, and doable form of professional development (Hine, 2013). Dajani (2015) recognized that professional development begins in the classroom with the teacher finding solutions to problems and remedies for deficiencies. In earlier research, Richards and Lockhart (1994) agreed by asserting that the information gathered through means of reflective teaching “can serve as a basis for self-evaluation and is therefore an important component of professional development” (p. 2). One goal of the CRTC program was to see professional development and improvement among the participating teachers. Murray (2015) noted that the teachers who engaged in the CRTC, a type of sustained professional development that focused specifically on critical thinking skills, saw improved overall classroom practice (p. 28).

The benefits of reflective teaching are not limited to the teacher's professional and personal development. Reflective teaching also appears to have a great impact on the students being taught. Murray (2015) stated that being a reflective practitioner “is [also] important for students’ learning. By dedicating time to [reflection], we can stay true to our students, help them become the best they can be, and prepare them for...life” (p. 28). Because reflective teachers are in the classroom and regularly interacting with their students, they can “perceive the impact of [their] interactions on the students’ learning experience” and thereby positively affect the students and their learning (Amobi, 2006, p. 27).

Wu (2016) studied the effects of reflective teaching among five business English teachers at the Huaiyin Institute of Technology. Wu hypothesized that requiring teachers to be reflective would result in positive changes to the teachers' performance (p. 1988). The teachers were asked to keep a regular, yet informal, teaching journal in addition to meeting as a group to collectively plan and discuss their lessons. Through reflection and collaboration, Wu found that the students
of these teachers were more satisfied with their teachers during the semester in which the teachers were reflecting (p. 1992).

The research literature is clear that one reflective journal entry will not substantially produce changes in teaching or learning (Murray, 2015). Prolonged engagement in the reflective practice broadens the view of the situation and narrows the gap between questions and answers (Williams, 2011). Sustained reflective teaching appears to help teachers see progress, apply new strategies, and become more self-aware, allowing “generative change to take place” (Murray, 2015, p. 28).

The regard for reflective practice as a means of improving teaching ability and techniques is also neglected by teachers who do not perceive the impact it can have in the classroom (Dajani, 2015). Some teachers struggle to utilize reflection in their teaching due to other, more pressing, obligations or tasks that require their time. “Teaching is hard work and reflection on teaching is also hard work” (Amobi, 2006, p. 24). Dajani (2015) stated that the difference between the two “hard works” may be a lack of “…accountability to be reflective and evaluative about their practices…” (p. 119) and the focus on grading, testing, and delivering the subject matter may encourage teachers to “trade one hard work for another” (Amobi, 2006, p. 24).

**Effective Reflection in Pre-service Teacher Education**

Fortunately, many teacher education programs do recognize the benefits of reflective teaching assignments. Johnson and Golombek (1992) studied six MA TESOL graduates as they began their classroom student-teaching experiences. Their research highlighted one benefit of reflective teaching as a way to handle the cognitive demands of the profession and encourage student teachers to become aware of their teaching decisions. Through retrospectives written by
student ESL teachers, it was ascertained that these teachers were made aware of the “factors influencing their instructional decisions” (Johnson & Golombek, 1992, p. 512). The results of their study not only brought to light the overwhelming mental load placed on pre-service ESL teachers as they are teaching, but they also concluded that reflection helps pre-service ESL teachers "cope with the cognitive demands of second language teaching” (Johnson & Golombek, 1992, p. 508). Some of the cognitive demands they highlighted were student-teacher interaction, making on-the-spot decisions, and managing time. Coping strategies such as increased awareness of teaching decisions and an ability to evaluate classroom effectiveness were brought about by the reflective process required in their pre-service teaching to manage the cognitive load of teaching.

**Reflective assignments.** Teacher educators help promote metacognitive awareness in pre-service teachers by assigning reflective teaching assignments such as “stimulated recall” and “self-report” where teachers are “asked to describe what they learned or what they were thinking...during classroom instruction” (Duffy et al, 2009, p. 244). In Johnson's (1992) study, the pre-service teachers were becoming more aware of their instructional decisions in relation to the classroom happenings. The goal of her study was to help pre-service teachers use their teaching experiences to uncover their underlying instructional beliefs. Richards and Lockhart (1994) put it this way, “In every lesson and in every classroom, events occur which the teacher can use to develop a deeper understanding of teaching” (p. 6).

Unfortunately, these assignment types have been scrutinized and labeled as an undemanding assignment form that “induces emotion-laden, ritualistic confessionals from student [teachers]” and may be an insufficient and inaccurate way for teachers to express experiences and feelings (Amobi, 2006, p. 30). In addition, pre-service teachers in the role of students, may not have a
clear idea of the purpose behind reflective assignments and therefore may identify them as busywork. Campoy (2010) argued that reflective assignments can produce reflections full of “trite educational ideas, sprinkled with textbook jargon” intended to fulfill the assignment requirements to get a grade without producing meaningful thought (p. 16).

Amobi (2006) studied the variety of ways teacher educators attempt to instill the practice of reflection in pre-service teachers. While writing assignments are a common practice for teacher educators, Amobi (2006) proposed that the journal assignments be linked to a specific learning context meaning that the teachers should reflect on topics with which they have had an encounter. In addition, novice teachers should be provided with thought provoking questions or guidelines to help focus their reflections. Thereby, guided reflection contributes to the teachers’ reflective writing and their opportunities to share their findings with others. By so doing, teacher educators help pre-service teachers make meaning of their teaching decisions and reflections (Amobi, 2006). Whichever way teacher educators may choose to incorporate reflective teaching assignments, Amobi (2006) argued that reflective tasks are “a quintessential element that breathes life [into] high-quality teaching” and should not be left out of teacher education because other pedagogical skills were felt to be more pressing (p. 24).

**Teaching reflection.** Producing purposeful and relevant introspection on teaching must be purposely taught and exemplified (Amobi, 2006; Pellerine, 2015). Pre-service teachers “will not become reflective just because [teacher educators] extol the value of reflection to them and ask them to do reflective writing assignments” (Amobi, 2006, p.34). Afshar (2015) said that “teachers need more than developing reflective thinking to be regarded as a reflective teacher. It can be understood that reflective thinking is necessary, but not sufficient, for EFL teachers. When reflective thinking results in a reflective practice or when teachers’ reflective thoughts and
actions go hand in hand, it would seem to suffice” (p. 619).

Reflective teaching can be instilled in teachers early on. Teacher education programs are an ideal setting for learning how to be reflective. The results of reflective teaching may not transfer into a reflective practice immediately. Afshar (2015) found that “as the teachers’ years of teaching experience increase, their levels of reflective teaching and reflective thinking also rise.” (p. 619) Yet, it would be even more beneficial if the teachers who enter the educational workplace, are already acquainted with, practiced in, and motivated to perform reflective teaching. Amobi (2006) wrote, "Through facilitating novice teachers’ reflection on the factors that guide their actions in concrete teaching situations, teacher educators can help them become cognizant about the elements that comprise the Gestalts of these situations." (p. 28). Pre-service teachers can be informed about the many benefits of keeping a reflective teaching journal and given the opportunity to practice such reflective teaching in pre-service teaching scenarios.

**Rationale for the Project**

One teacher education program that has implemented reflective assignments in the graduate student coursework is BYU’s MA TESOL program. This graduate program has designed five course outcomes on which the completion of the program is based (Linguistics & English Language, 2015, p. 2). The following two learning outcomes are particularly emphasized during the second semester of the program:

1. Language Learning Theory: Analyze and apply theories of second language learning and acquisition.
2. Teaching Knowledge and Skills: Examine second language teaching strategies and procedures and apply accepted principles of effective lesson planning and materials development. (p. 2)

The practicum experience as presently organized for the pre-service ESL teachers at BYU includes three components: 1) a Methods and Materials Application Course, 2) a teaching practicum where pre-service teachers are given in-service training, and 3) ten weeks of practical teaching experience. Five weeks of instruction are done in a supervised team-teaching setting in an Intensive English Program (IEP) where student-teachers are paired with an experienced teacher. Five more weeks of instruction occur in a mentored team-teaching in an evening community English course where the pre-service teachers plan the course syllabus, the lesson content, materials, and activities. These three fundamental elements have been designed to guide teachers through their practicum experience by providing instruction and practice of appropriate methodologies and skills review, practical application of teaching approaches and techniques, and reflection on their individual experiences.

The Methods and Materials Application course (LING 611) is designed to aid the pre-service teachers in applying teaching theory in their practicum teaching experiences. One assignment that has been implemented in this course is reflective teaching logs that allow pre-service language teachers the opportunity to explore an area of teaching with which they may be struggling or about which they desire to increase their knowledge and/or skill. The purpose of these logs, as stated in the syllabus, is to help teachers identify an area for improvement and further study. Through academic research, discussions with colleagues, and reflection, the pre-service teachers can grow in their understanding of approaches, techniques, and strategies that would improve their teaching performance. It was also intended that the lessons learned through
these reflective research and writing tasks would not only benefit their practicum experience, but would further enable their development as practicing ESL teachers.

This study was designed to evaluate the use of teaching logs and the insights the pre-service teachers had while participating in reflective teaching. The reflective teaching journal assignment was analyzed to determine if this activity was meeting its intended objective as a beneficial activity for the pre-service teachers in the MA TESOL program. In hopes to evaluate the effectiveness of this particular assignment, three research questions unfolded:

1) What benefits do pre-service teachers perceive from using reflective teaching journals in pre-service ESL teaching programs?
2) What constraints do pre-service teachers perceive from using reflective teaching journals in pre-service ESL teaching programs?
3) Was there a change over time in the pre-service teachers’ views of using reflective journals from the beginning of the class to the end of the class?

**Project Design**

In order to sufficiently identify the perceived benefits and disadvantages, a qualitative descriptive case study was conducted. The data was collected by means of questionnaires, observations, a focus group, and interviews in order to narrate and describe the participants’ experiences with reflective teaching journals. This methodology was chosen because it provided informative results regarding the assignment and its effectiveness. In addition, I wanted to triangulate the data in order to provide valid support to the findings.
The aims of this qualitative case study were to describe the student-teacher perceptions of reflective teaching journals in a TESOL pre-service practicum and understand their experience with keeping a reflective teaching journal.

**Context and Participants**

Thirteen pre-service ESL teachers, enrolled in BYU’s MA TESOL graduate program, were invited to participate in this evaluation of reflective teaching as part of the Methods & Materials Application course and teaching practicum. Institutional Review Board (IRB) permission was granted to study the use of reflective journals in this course through the data collection procedures indicated above. All participants also gave voluntary consent to participate in the semester-long study.

During this semester, these graduate students taught courses in an English Language Center in both the Intensive English Program (IEP) program and the Community Outreach ESL program for adult learners (CORE). The researcher expected that the participants would draw from these teaching experiences for their reflections.

**Assignment Overview**

Before the start of the semester, I had several discussions with the course instructor for the purpose of creating a reflective cycle that the pre-service teachers could follow in the course of completing the reflective journal assignment. The goal was to guide the students’ thinking and provide them with some informal and implicit instruction on reflection by giving them a reflective cycle to follow. Gibbs’ (1988) reflective cycle was used as a foundation for the cycle we created and used in the course. We based our cycle on that of Gibbs’ because of his use of questions that encourage intro- and retrospection. The cycle created for the LING 611 class is
shown in Figure 2. Per its design, this cycle highlighted the evaluation, analysis, and conclusion portions of Gibbs’ cycle by having the pre-service teachers research, discuss, and write about their concerns.

Figure 2. Eckstein and Sanders, Reflective teaching cycle for LING 611, 2017.

The assignment included question prompts (see Appendix A) that were designed to promote retrospection because we wanted pre-service teachers to look back on their teaching and identify an issue or concern. For example, a few of the prompts were “What do I do if one or two students are dominating the class discussion?,” “How can I effectively lesson plan and avoid teacher burnout?,” and “My students seem to be at different language levels within the class level. How can I handle this?” The teachers were not obligated to choose from this list if they felt a different challenge was more applicable to their teaching situation. The goal was to allow pre-
service teachers the opportunity to explore their own personal teaching experience in relation to the concepts, theories, and practices they had been learning in their graduate coursework.

**Data Collection and Instruments**

Data were collected through questionnaires, observations, focus groups, and interviews. The initial questionnaire was administered in class, and the final questionnaire was distributed online via Qualtrics—an online survey platform. The interviews were recorded to aid data analysis. The data were analyzed using a Grounded Theory approach. Wood and Kroger (2000) talk about grounding the interpretations of qualitative data as the act of "justifying an interpretation of discourse by drawing on evidence in the discourse" (p. 112). In applying this method of analysis, two raters were able to corroborate on important themes that describe the experiences and comments presented by the pre-service teachers. The full analytical process will be described later on.

**Project Implementation**

Once the course instructor and I finalized the nature of the reflective journaling assignment and the prompts the pre-service teachers could select, our focus shifted to implementing the task in the course curriculum. The focus of this study was to identify the pre-service teachers’ perceptions of this reflective teaching assignment and reflective practice in general. At the beginning of the semester, the students completed an initial questionnaire (see Appendix B) which pre-assessed the teachers’ understanding of reflective teaching. The following three open-ended questions were asked on the survey.

1) How would you define or describe reflective teaching?

2) Why would you use reflective teaching in your personal teaching experience?
3) What benefits or disadvantages can you perceive in reflective teaching?

An identical questionnaire was distributed at the end of the semester. The questionnaires were collected for cross analysis with the questionnaires distributed at the beginning of the semester in hopes of ascertaining if the participants’ views, opinions, or understanding had changed over time.

In designing the class, the course instructor determined that there would be six reflective periods over the course of a 14-week semester in which the pre-service teachers would complete a reflective teaching task. Participants would write a two-page reflective journal entry every two weeks during the semester. Each reflective period began with the pre-service teachers selecting a topic or area of concern that was relevant to their current teaching in hopes of making the assignment as meaningful as possible. On Friday, five days into each reflective period, the course instructor allotted 10-20 minutes of class time for the student teachers to reflect on, discuss, reflect on, and analyze their reflections and research with other teachers in the course. In small groups of two to four, each participant presented their experience, question, or concern while the other(s) in the group listened and then provided feedback. Previous research (Dajani, 2015; Danielson, 2009; Murray, 2015; Pellerin & Paukner, Nogués 2015) has shown that feedback and suggestions from others can help pre-service ESL teachers gain greater insights on how to resolve problems and improve particular teaching practices. The researcher observed each of the six peer discussions and took notes. At the end of the reflective period, the pre-service teachers produced the two-page journal entry. Figure 3 outlines the sequence for one reflective period.
This qualitative study was responsive in nature. Therefore, I adapted the assignment implementation as needed to meet the needs of the participants and ensure the quality of data collected. After observing the peer discussions in the first two reflective periods, I noticed that the pre-service teachers did not appear to understand the nature, purpose, or potential of the assignment. In their discussions, the teachers appeared to be focused on the specifics of the content they had to produce in the two-page write up. They failed to recognize the purpose of selecting a concern for the reflection that pertained specifically to their teaching experiences. In addition, several of the pre-service teachers consistently came to the discussion groups without having reflected on any topic or concern. For example, one teacher asked her group as they looked at the list of prompts, “Have you picked a topic for this week?” indicating a lack of attention to the task. Other teachers expressed similar comments regarding the prompts such as “[I’m] still deciding which question to choose for [my] journal” and “I haven’t looked at [the list] yet” and “I think I’ll do this one [referring to one of the options on the list].” These comments suggested that the teachers appeared to be approaching this reflective task as just another assignment they were to complete rather than a focused learning experience.

Based on my observations, I consulted with the course instructor, and we agreed that an intervention was necessary where I would take time during the class to provide the pre-service
teachers with some instruction on the purpose of the reflective journaling tasks and the implementation of the cycle that was to guide their activity and growth. I wanted the pre-service teachers to understand that the purpose of reflection was not to simply answer a list of questions, but to participate in an exercise in critical thinking and reflection on their personal classroom experiences. In addition, I realized that while the assignment instructions had been well scaffolded, the discussion groups were being administered with little direction. The pre-service teachers were grouped by the course instructor and then left to themselves to manage the discussion of the topics. It was important to help the teachers understand the purpose and format of the discussion groups, if they were to realize the full benefits tied to the task. In addition, I wanted to clarify how they could use the list of prompts to promote critical thinking. After the second reflective period in week five of the semester, the intervention occurred where I provided fifteen minutes of instruction on the purpose of reflective teaching and how the peer discussion groups were to function during the class time.

With permission of the instructor, I gave a short, in-class presentation to the teachers that modeled the ideal reflective cycle. I presented some of the previous research (Danielson, 2009; Murray, 2015; Richards & Lockhart, 1994) on reflective teaching and more fully explained the reflective cycle in which they were participating. In addition, I instructed them on the purpose of the discussion groups and how they could be used to benefit their reflective research and writing. One pre-service teacher adequately summarized the intervention as the following:

“[We] should come prepared with something to talk about.”

Following the third reflective teaching period, (week 7 of the semester) the pre-service teachers self-selected to volunteer for participation in a focus group. The purpose of the focus group was to explore, with the participants, their experiences with reflective teaching thus far.
Seven participants joined the focus group and consented to have the session recorded. This allowed me to lead the group discussion without having to take notes at the same time. I began with discussion questions (see Appendix C) hoping to prompt the teachers to share their personal experiences and thoughts. During the focus group, we discussed the assignment structure, the reflective cycle created by the course instructor and I, the peer discussion groups, and other concerns and comments presented by the pre-service teachers.

Five individuals from the focus group were later selected using purposeful sampling to participate in one-on-one interviews. Purposeful sampling is a non-probability sampling technique where participants are chosen based on the judgment of the researcher (Lund, 2012). Participants were selected for the interviews based on who shared thoughtful and extensive experiences, comments, and beliefs during the focus group session. I also wanted to include participants who had a variety of backgrounds in teaching, TESOL, and reflection. I believed the diversity of experience these participants would share would provide better data connected to answering the research questions. The interviews were semi-structured (see Appendix D) in order to allow the participants to freely share their individual experiences.

Each of these types of data collected: questionnaires, observations, focus group comments, and interviews. They were employed as a means to understand how the teachers were receiving and utilizing this reflective journal assignment, what benefits or disadvantages they perceived, and their overall thoughts on reflective teaching.

**Analysis**

The initial analysis involved taking the responses obtained from the surveys and using a Grounded Theory approach to draw evidence from the text that were categorized into salient
themes (Wood & Kroger, 2000). In order to ensure credibility, another experienced rater (who had a MA in TESOL and Ph.D. in Instructional Psychology and Technology) and I read through the responses, independently, multiple times to code the information. Both our analyses resulted in the same primary concepts. With these foundational concepts, we discussed and agreed on themes which these concepts represented. Our goal was to label the data with themes that adequately described the patterns in the collected data. These themes further described the benefits and drawbacks of this reflective teaching assignment as perceived by the pre-service teachers and their overall experience with reflective teaching journals.

The observation notes, focus group reflections, and interview responses were used to verify the accuracy of the themes identified in the survey responses. By triangulating the data, I was provided greater validity to the analysis by including data collected through several mediums. In addition, I was able to gain a broader understanding of the pre-service teachers’ experiences by employing different methods of data collection.

**Results**

**Research Question 1**

The first research question focused on the benefits the pre-service teachers perceived in carrying out this particular reflective assignment and teacher reflection in general as a practice in their teaching practicum. The first research question was stated as follows:

What benefits do pre-service teachers perceive from using reflective teaching journals in pre-service ESL teaching programs?

Data from the initial and final questionnaires were analyzed using Grounded Interpretation (Wood and Kroger, 2000) to capture categories that emerged from the qualitative responses given by the participants. There were several prominent themes that emerged from the
questionnaire data which were classified as benefits. Table 1 further explains the themes and how the questionnaire responses were classified.

Table 1

Themes that Emerged as Benefits from the Questionnaire Responses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Change</td>
<td>This theme included any mention of implementing changes, implementing findings, or implementing a plan of action to create changes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retrospection</td>
<td>This theme included any mention of thinking back, looking back, or reflecting back on the experiences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Habit</td>
<td>This theme included comments that focused on consistent or constant use of reflection to improve teaching.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation</td>
<td>This theme included reference to analyzing or evaluating the teacher (self) or the teaching experience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Improvement</td>
<td>This theme included mention to improvement as a teacher, or using reflection as a means of professional development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awareness</td>
<td>This theme included comments that stated a greater awareness or recognition of happenings in the teaching experience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benefit to Students</td>
<td>This theme included any reference to using reflective teaching as a means to help the students' learning experience.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After identifying themes that represented benefits, the frequency of the codes by theme in the initial survey, the final survey, and overall were totaled. The overall frequency is shown in Figure 4. The data presented are the frequencies counted by the first rater. However, the most prominent themes identified were the same for both raters.

Figure 4. Frequency of themes commenting on the benefits of reflective journals.

A few of these codes were more prominent than others. Three salient themes emerged from the data analysis: teacher improvement, awareness, and retrospection. Each of these categories will be discussed further.
**Teacher Improvement.** A total of 56 codes included reference to teacher improvement and professional development throughout the questionnaire responses. They stated that reflective teaching helped improve such things as their teaching skills, organization, and professional development. Example comments are given in Table 2.

Table 2

*Example Responses from the Questionnaires in Regards to Teacher Improvement*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher Improvement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Reflective teaching is accessible for all teachers and is one way to develop professionally.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Find ways to improve; systematically and strategically progress.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Continued improvement; continued learning about NEW teaching strategies, methods, etc.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;It definitely helps to improve teaching.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Reflective teaching can help teachers improve their class in many areas.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;A more organized approach to improving one's own teaching.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Encourages ongoing professional development.&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These comments exemplify that reflective teaching is a practical means for professional development and the improvement of teaching practices.

**Retrospection.** The category with the second most frequent number of comments identifying the benefits of reflective teaching was that of retrospection. A total of 35 comments
were coded with this category. Table 3 shows comments from the surveys regarding retrospection as a perceived benefit.

Table 3

*Example Responses from the Questionnaires in Regards to Retrospection*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Retrospection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>● &quot;I want to remember, in detail, how well certain lesson plans were implemented.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● &quot;If I reflect on who I'm teaching, then I can foresee students' needs and help them more.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● &quot;Critically thinking about what has gone well and what hasn't.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● &quot;Reflective teaching includes thinking about a class and evaluating what happened.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● &quot;Contemplating and finding ways to make yourself better and gaining wisdom from what you accomplished.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● &quot;When you think deeply about your current teaching methods, as well as [your] students.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● &quot;Taking time after a lesson to ponder the teaching.&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Awareness.** The third most frequent category containing 31 comments relating the benefits of reflective teaching was that of awareness. Participants appeared to recognize, as consistent with established literature (Richards & Lockhart, 1994), that the act of reflecting on teaching performance makes the teacher more sensitive to elements or circumstances that influence decision-making or help the teacher notice what is happening in the classroom. In an interview,
one teacher explained that reflective teaching made her more aware of her teaching decisions when she said, "If you don't stop and really think about it, then you don't always realize all the ways and in and outs of the things you do." She went on to explain how she had reflected on and researched the topic she chose for one of the reflective periods, that of *adequately assessing students*. She spoke of the mental process she went through in coming up with new ways of assessing her students on a particular concept. She continued, "I think because I had to alter the variety and think more about 'why am I doing this assignment,' [I’m] becoming more self-aware of what I was doing as a teacher." In the survey, another participant stated that reflective teaching “helps [her] be aware of [her] weaknesses.” This sentiment was mentioned throughout the survey responses and are shown in Table 4.

Table 4

*Example Responses from the Questionnaires in Regards to Awareness*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Awareness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- &quot;I would describe [reflective teaching] as a permanent state of awareness meant to consciously look for teaching situations that need further analysis.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- &quot;Increased noticing of what I do well and what could be improved.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- &quot;You can notice how you teach and improve it.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- &quot;Awareness of strengths and weaknesses.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- &quot;I know why I did whatever I did in the classroom. I know why I made the decisions to act in a certain way.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- &quot;It's noticing situations and reaction in the moment of teaching.&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
"To be an effective teacher, I need to be aware of how I am coming across. Reflective teaching will help me be aware of my strengths as well as my weaknesses."

Research Question 2

The second research question focused on what constraints the pre-service teachers perceived in doing this reflective assignment and incorporating reflection as a practice. The second research question was stated as follows:

What constraints do pre-service teachers perceive from using reflective teaching journals in pre-service ESL teaching programs?

In response to this question, one teacher stated that she "recognize[d] the benefit of it...recognize[d] the good practice of it," but was unsure whether or not she would continue the practice beyond the course of the class due to the constraints or drawbacks of reflective journaling. Others teachers expressed similar feelings toward the assignment. Something was holding them back from being reflective teachers.

The constraints they expressed were categorized in the same way as the benefits using a Grounded Interpretation (Wood and Kroger, 2000) to capture emerging themes from the questionnaire responses. Table 5 shows the themes that emerged as constraints.
Table 5

*Themes that Emerged as Constraints from the Questionnaire Responses*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Time</strong></td>
<td>This theme included any mention of the time, tedious effort, or additional load required when participating in reflective teaching.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Discouragement</strong></td>
<td>This theme included any mention of the humbling, critical, or demotivating nature of participating in reflective teaching.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lack of Knowledge</strong></td>
<td>This theme included comments that focused on the teachers not understanding or being able to fulfill the task due to lack of knowledge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Impracticality</strong></td>
<td>This theme included comments that called reflective teaching impractical and not useful.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After identifying the two leading constraints as perceived by the teachers, the overall frequency was totaled as shown in Figure 5.

![Figure 5](image_url)  
*Figure 5. Frequency of themes commenting on the constraints of reflective journals.*
Two noticeable constraints emerged from the data. These two themes were Time and Discouragement.

**Time.** The clear constraint mentioned by the pre-service teachers most frequently was the time-intensive nature of reflective teaching. Several teachers mentioned the large amounts of time put into the reflective process and write-up. Some participants stated that the assignment, with all its parts, was tedious. Many teachers commented on the number of steps. Although they recognized each step’s importance, the teachers found the cycle to be very time consuming. The pre-service teachers’ example comments from the surveys are shown in Table 6.

Table 6

*Example Responses from the Questionnaires in Regards to Time*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>● &quot;It can be time consuming while you figure out how you want to format your reflections.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● &quot;It takes time to come up with a well-documented teaching reflection. Because of busy schedules, it might be hard to have time for quality reflections.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● &quot;Reflective teaching takes time and discipline...over and above the regular preparation and grading expected in the teaching profession.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● &quot;It definitely helps to improve teaching.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● &quot;One disadvantage, however, could be the time and effort a teacher has to put into the journal entries to make it applicable and consistent.&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Discouragement. Many participant comments mentioned the possible discouraging, criticizing, and humbling nature of reflective teaching. The idea that becoming aware of teaching weaknesses and their discouraging effect was very clearly articulated throughout the responses. This category might have been a frequent mention because the majority of the pre-service teachers were novice ESL teachers with little pedagogical experience. The pre-service teachers’ example comments from the surveys are shown in Table 7.

Table 7

Example Responses from the Questionnaires in Regards to Discouragement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discouragement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>● &quot;[Reflective teaching] could be used as an avenue for self-deprecation.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● &quot;Sometimes people don't like to see the areas where they could improve.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● &quot;It can be discouraging realizing all the areas you need to improve.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● &quot;The truth may be discouraging.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● &quot;If a teacher is so harsh on themselves that discouragement sets in.&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Research Question 3

After classifying benefits and constraints stated in the questionnaire data, attention turned to answering the third research question. In this question, responses from the initial survey and the final survey were compared against each other in order to answer the following research question:

Was there a change over time in the pre-service teachers’ views of using reflective journals from the beginning of the class to the end of the class?

**Comparative change in benefits.** In order to determine if the pre-service teachers' perception of benefits had changed, the frequency of the codes by theme from the initial survey and the final survey were totaled and compared against each other. Figure 6 shows the comparison of the benefits.

![Figure 6. Comparison of perceived benefits of reflective journals from initial survey to final survey.](image)

**Teacher Improvement.** Figure 6 shows that the theme with the most frequent number of comments in both the initial and final questionnaires was that of teacher improvement. In the
final survey, ten more comments occurred regarding this category than on the initial survey. This result appears to suggest that the teachers were feeling more confident about ways that reflective journaling could produce insights that benefit their teaching. In the final survey, one teacher commented that reflective teaching is "the quickest way to [be] the best teacher!" Another teacher spoke of why she thought reflective teaching was helpful to her when she said, "I mean it's just beneficial. Especially since I'm at such an early stage in my teaching career. I feel like I'm a little more malleable, so I can make those changes now."

**Retrospection.** The category with the second largest number of comments overall was the category of retrospection. Little if any change, though, was observed in the number of comments the teachers made in reference to this topic. The teachers’ beliefs were consistent from the beginning to the end regarding the value of retrospection.

**Awareness.** In both surveys, awareness had the third highest number of comments overall, and there was an increase of five in the number of positive comments regarding this theme. Responses frequently referred to the concept of awareness of teaching as a benefit. Two contributing themes are *identify weaknesses* and *identify strengths*. The second survey showed an increased reference to both of these subthemes. This may indicate that the participants’ perspective became more specific in that an increase of awareness of teaching entails the ability to identify strengths and weaknesses. In general, both the first and second survey had more mentions of weaknesses than strengths. Of special note, two participants highlighted that the increased awareness enabled them to find “satisfaction in a job well done.” The interviews supported the findings from the surveys. One participant mentioned that reflective teaching had made her more aware, specifically of how she acted in classroom. She said, "I noticed I am kind of a fidgety teacher. I think it has made me more aware. I have a more definite plan for what I
am going to be doing down to the smallest things such as body language." Another teacher commented on the overwhelming feelings she encountered as a new teacher in the practicum, but how being self-aware helped her to "recognize an issue [she] had reflected on was presenting itself in the classroom."

**Evaluation.** It is worth noting that the theme of evaluation dropped noticeably in the second survey. In the second survey, the pre-service teachers did not mention the use of *evaluation* or *analysis* as frequently as in the first survey. However, the raters determined that the pre-service teachers might have changed the terminology they used to describe the benefits to be more specific toward reflection because they had a better understanding of what reflection was. The second survey included more vocabulary such as *identifying, improving, changing, and awareness*. In the focus groups and interviews, the pre-service teachers did not discuss using evaluation and analysis as benefits of reflective teaching. They focused on teacher improvement, awareness, and retrospection, which are the salient themes I chose to discuss.

**Comparative change in constraints.** After comparing the benefits that teachers expressed in the initial and final surveys, attention then turned to the constraints. Figure 7 shows the comparison of constraints identified initial survey to the final survey.
Figure 7. Comparison of perceived constraints of reflective journals from the initial survey to the final survey.

**Time.** Of the overall number of comments made describing constraints, 26 focused on the category of time. From the initial survey to the final survey, this category was one of the most frequently mentioned. The following excerpts from the interview data help explain why this was the case. When asked if the pre-service teachers would continue this practice of reflective journaling after the class, two of the interviewed participants expressed they would not continue this practice. One teacher stated, "I don't have the time...there just comes a point when life just gets a little busier." The other teacher responded, "I really don't know, if not pushed to turn something in, if I have the self-discipline to do this on my own. [In] the daily functioning of teaching and managing work-life balance, I don't know if I would. I personally tend to be someone who performs when it's expected and then doesn't when I'm not. I'll do things for other people but not for myself."
While the teachers seemed to recognize the value of being reflective, several indicated that they would not take the time to write things down. Two of the interviewed participants said they would continue reflective journaling, but not to the same extent as this assignment. One of these teachers commented that she would not, "go so far as to do a write-up like I did for this class," but indicated that researching topics, looking for articles, asking others for advice is something she would continue. The other teacher praised the journals as an assignment for the class, but not as a practice to continue. She responded that she would be reflective in a simpler fashion using, "bullet points, because the journal is quite long." Her reasoning for this was that she was "never going to look at [the journals] again." These comments indicate that the teachers did recognize the benefits of reflective teaching, but this particular method of capturing insights they felt was tedious and time-consuming.

**Discouragement.** While this constraint was prominent in both surveys, comments in the final survey highlighting this as a constraint dropped from nine to three. This change suggests that the pre-service teachers did not find themselves criticizing themselves or feeling discouraged as much as they had originally anticipated. In fact, many teachers felt more confidence in approaching their weaknesses, especially in seeking help for these weaknesses. In the interviews, three out of five of the participants mentioned how this reflective teaching assignment encouraged them to talk to more experienced teachers. One teacher said, "[the assignment] gave me an excuse to talk to the [other] teachers. I wouldn't talk to them normally just because I have no excuse." Similarly, another teacher said, "I feel like I can approach them with issues without maybe seeming like the needy one on the block."
Insights from the Interviews and Focus Group

The interviews and focus group provided a greater clarification to the comments participants made in the surveys. The comments from the focus groups and interviews supported the major emergent themes of teacher improvement, retrospection, awareness, time, and discouraging. In the interviews, an important theme emerged that was not prominent in the questionnaire data: collaboration.

Collaboration. Collaboration was a popular topic during the interviews, but it was less mentioned in the questionnaire responses. In the interviews, all five participants expressed that the peer discussion groups were both beneficial and constraining. The peer discussion groups were held at the midpoint during the two-week reflective period. The purpose of the group discussions, as established by the course instructor, was to have the pre-service teachers talk about their chosen topics and the research they had done on the topic with the same people every reflective period.

Comments regarding the discussion groups were also brought up by participants in the focus group. During the focus group, several positive comments were made regarding these peer discussion groups such as: “The peer discussions are a great place to vent and the other students can relate because they are in the same spot” and “They’re good because we can share sources with each other and bounce ideas off each other if we’re doing the same topic or if we’ve already done a topic that another person is currently doing.”

Overall, the comments regarding the use and value of the discussion groups appeared mixed. Some of the pre-service teachers wanted to change groups over the course of the semester instead of keeping the same groups for each peer discussion. On the other hand, other teachers
expressed the value of talking to the same peers each discussion group. Table 8 lists some of their comments from the focus group and interviews.

Table 8

*Comments from Participants Regarding Peer Discussion Groups*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Same Peer Discussion Groups</th>
<th>Change Peer Discussion Groups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“[You] feel like you can trust and get advice from classmates. It is great for building friendships.”</td>
<td>“They could be better if we weren’t always talking to the same people... We should change the groups up and talk to different people to get different perspectives.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“If they’re more reserved about opening up...it could just kind of feel like they’re skimming the surface each time instead of getting into a really in depth discussion.”</td>
<td>“It would be great to have input from other peers.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;I like the comfortable nature of getting to know a few really more in depth. [You] feel like you can share more intimate feelings or feelings of frustration.”</td>
<td>“[The] discussions in class...would be helpful to meet with different people instead of the same people every week.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Last week we didn’t have our normal groups because of the TESOL conference. It did feel a little different. Not that I don’t appreciate input from all of my peers, but I did definitely notice a difference where I felt more comfortable talking about issues or things that were going on with my own teaching.”</td>
<td>“Just to keep people on their toes and give them more opportunities to rub shoulder with more classmates.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“You get a fresh perspective and fresh ideas, fresh experiences from other people.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Discussion

Evaluation of the qualitative data captured in this study from the surveys, interviews, and focus group suggest that the pre-service teachers in this study did perceive benefits as well as constraints regarding the process of reflective teaching. In addition, some of their perceptions changed over time regarding the practice of reflective teaching and the way the instruction regarding reflective teaching was carried out. As identified in previous research, reflective teaching, and in particular reflective journaling tasks are an effective way to promote professional development and teacher improvement (Murray, 2015; Wu, 2016). In addition, collaboration contributes beneficially to the reflective process. The advantage to utilizing reflective teaching in pre-service coursework is that teachers can benefit from learning about and implementing this practice early on in their teaching career.

Pedagogical Implications

There are several implications from this research that specifically address courses taken by pre-service teachers in teacher training programs. There were also implications for pre-service and in-service teachers.

Teacher Training Programs. This research focused on the use of reflective teaching assignments in pre-service teacher training. Reflective teaching was identified through this study as a beneficial activity for pre-service teachers because it promotes improvement in teaching, awareness of teaching decisions in the classroom, and the activity of thinking or looking back on teaching and making sense of the teaching performance. Pre-service teachers come from a variety of teaching backgrounds with a wide range of experience. This kind of activity can engage teachers in small-scale professional development by forcing them to identify a weakness in their teaching and find a solution to strengthen it. This process can make them better prepared
for the field of teaching. This improvement of performance happens because teachers are becoming more aware of their teaching decisions and behaviors, another benefit of reflective assignments. Pre-service teachers who have participated in reflective teaching may develop the ability to be metacognitively aware of their teaching because they have practice in using higher-order thinking skills (Duffy et al., 2009). This metacognitive ability is pertinent not only during teaching, but also after and before where teachers can be retrospective. In being retrospective, teachers ask themselves questions, evaluate their abilities, and problem solve. Teacher educators who include reflective assignments in teacher coursework are building teachers who can find answers through small-scale research.

However, these assignments need to be implemented carefully with clear objectives. In performing this study, I found that the pre-service teachers were not grasping the objective of the reflective teaching journals. This caused concern because the pre-service teachers were not cycling through the reflective process as naturally as I had initially hoped. Therefore, an intervention was needed in order to guide these teachers toward resourceful and beneficial reflections. Laying a strong groundwork of reflective practice will help pre-service teachers understand the objectives of true reflective practice. Without stating clear objectives, pre-service teachers may treat these assignments as busywork and not utilize them for personal improvement.

To avoid and alleviate the heavy time commitment of being reflective, teacher educators may want to explore a variety of formats and ways to write reflective journals. Though writing academic prose provides good practice for the pre-service teachers, other options such as bullet point lists or abbreviated notes may appear to be more enticing for the busy and overwhelmed pre-service teachers. This is not to say that reflection can be rushed. Duffy et al. (2009) proposed
that the nature of reflective thinking still takes mental work and time, but pre-service teachers might be more obliged to be reflective if they feel some freedom in the format of their write-up.

In terms of collaboration, the pre-service teachers found the peer discussion groups to be very helpful and insightful. In this study, the course instructor determined the assigned groups at the beginning of the semester. In the interviews and focus group, the pre-service teachers were divided in opinion as to the structure of these groups. I recommend that teacher educators find a balance between having the same group for an extended period of time and changing groups so that the pre-service teachers are able to interact with and learn from a wider circle of individuals. To enable this change, groups could be re-organized every three to four weeks, or they could be changed halfway through the semester.

This reflective assignment was implemented into a course with only a small connection to the pre-service teachers’ physical teaching experience. The pre-service teachers were concurrently enrolled in a practicum class that directly related to their physical teaching situations. If the reflective assignment had been implemented into the practicum course, the teachers might have received greater benefit from the assignment because they would have been in a state of mind where their teaching experiences were fresh of mind and often being discussed.

Finally, this reflective assignment required only six journal submissions. It is my opinion, that requiring the teachers to be reflective more frequently, such as every week, would greater instill this practice into the pre-service teachers professional development. In order to avoid it being too time consuming, the format of the submission could be shortened or eased to help lift the writing burden placed on the teachers.

**Pre-service and In-service Teachers.** Reflective teaching is an accessible route to improving teaching performance. Though it may be an additional load on top of other teaching
responsibilities, reflection should not be overlooked as a necessary and satisfying form of professional development. Teachers who use reflective teaching are allowing change to take place in their classrooms. This change can help teachers better prepare students to meet the course objectives. Teachers who reflect are able to identify strengths and weaknesses in their teaching because reflection promotes awareness. Recognizing weaknesses should not be a discouraging activity to teachers because reflective teachers are open to change and improvement. Previous research (Dajani, 2015; Johnson & Golombek, 1992; Murray, 2015; Pellerine & Paukner Nogués, 2015) supports the idea that reflective teaching produces opportunity for professional development and teacher improvement. Though learning and implementing reflection takes time and practice (Afshar, 2015), teachers who have learned over time to be reflective in teacher training are able to improve teaching abilities and be cognizant of their teaching actions in the classroom (Amobi, 2006). Therefore, teachers can teach with intention rather than only “reflect” the type of teaching they have experienced as a student.

Limitations

While careful steps were taken to investigate pre-service teachers’ perceptions regarding the value of reflective teaching tasks and activities, there were a few limitations to consider. While I had multiple conversations with the course instructor in creating this research project, the surveys, and the process of collecting data, there were difficulties that did arise connected to the implementation and analysis of the reflective journal assignments in the actual classroom. My role in the classroom and his involvement in this research project were not clearly established. The course instructor may not have wanted to interfere with the research being performed and therefore took a minimalistic approach to articulating the reflective assignment and its importance. Having set clearer responsibilities for the course instructor upfront, might have
eliminated some of the confusion the pre-service teachers had regarding their understanding of the purpose and nature of the assignment. In addition, meeting with the course instructor on a more regular basis could have provided him with a better understanding of the purpose and evolution of this reflective practice used in the class over the course of the semester.

Another limitation was the small number of participants. This study was designed as a research project involving a descriptive case study of the participants in one of the graduate MA TESOL course and their use of reflective teaching techniques. Additional data needs to be gathered over additional semesters to see if the attitudes and beliefs of participants in this course remain consistent among other participants in similar circumstances.

As mentioned previously, I provided an intervention following the second reflective period. I noticed that the participants were not fully grasping the purpose of the peer discussion groups or realizing the full potential of reflecting on personal practice. It is unclear how the intervention may have affected the results from this study. In addition, if I had started with the education on ideal reflection and the purpose of the peer discussion groups the results may or may not have been different. This intervention and when it occurred in the study might be additional limitation, but given the organic nature of reflection teaching and how one reflective teaching task can influence a subsequent task, the intervention was done with the purpose of helping the pre-service teachers fully understand the purpose of the reflective teaching in their development as teachers.

A final limitation occurred with the actual recording of the focus group. The focus group was held in a video observation room where the session was to have been recorded. Unfortunately, the recording of the focus group failed to be captured. To adapt to the given circumstances, I asked the participants to provide a written reflection of their comments during
the focus group. Five of the seven did so, and these were the five who were also selected to be interviewed.

Future Research

This study focused on the use of reflective teaching journals in pre-service teacher coursework and practicum training. Although the teachers in this context were assigned as part of the class to participate in doing reflective teaching journals, the results showed that the pre-service teachers might not continue in reflective practice due to time constraints. Future research into whether or not these teachers carry this practice into the profession would help indicate if this type of assignment is meeting its intended objective. Future research could also explore other reflective methods (stimulated recalls, action research, etc.) that may benefit teachers in developing metacognitive awareness and become reflective practitioners. I also suggest replicated research of other reflective teaching assignments in other teacher training programs in order to help solidify how best reflective teaching assignments should be structured in order to produce reflective practitioners.

Conclusion

The use of reflective journals demonstrated to the pre-service teachers and to the researchers the effectiveness of reflective teaching as a means of teacher improvement, helping teachers become more metacognitively aware of teaching decisions and retrospective, as well as providing them opportunities to improve and learn from collaborative experiences with their peers. Through the collection and analysis of data, I suggest that teacher education programs should include opportunities for pre-service teachers to practice reflective teaching as a means to improve teaching abilities and better understand their teaching decisions. Reflective teaching
assignments in pre-service teacher coursework is an ideal setting to instill a habit of reflective teaching and prepare teachers for in-service coursework. Prepared teachers may be more capable of problem-solving in their classrooms and seeing improvement in their teaching regularly. Finally, reflective teaching should be clearly articulated to pre-service teachers as a worthwhile activity that is worth the necessary time commitment.

References
http://dx.doi.org/10.14221/ajte.2014v40n3.8


APPENDIX A
Ling 611
Log Book Assignment

Rationale
While it is possible to receive useful feedback on your teaching and learning from peers, tutors, and instructors, the real key to improvement in almost any endeavor is reflection. Reflective teaching in particular allows you to see your own abilities, lacks, and needs as a teacher more clearly. This assignment requires you to complete several reflective teaching experiences in order to improve your teaching and develop a healthy habit of reflection, which will hopefully lead to lifelong reflective teaching.

Assignment
Over the course of this semester, you will complete six reflective teaching log book essays on topics related to your current teaching experiences. For each essay, you must select one topic and sincerely contemplate how it relates to and affects your teaching. You will do this by collecting personal thoughts, expert and peer advice (collected in class on specific Fridays), and academic scholarship. To clarify the process a little, please examine an adapted version of Gibbs’ (1988) reflecting teaching cycle below.

Product Write-up
From the reflective teaching process, you will compose a 2-page essay describing your insights related to your chosen topic as well as thoughts about how you will implement those insights into your future teaching. This write up should include the following components and features:

1. A brief introduction to your topic of concern and feelings about it. For instance, why did you choose it, what troubles have you had with this concern in the past, have you done anything to work on it before, etc?
2. Reflection insights including insight from your own observations, that of experts, and those of peers.
3. Academic insights including a minimum of four source-based references. At least two of those sources must be traditionally academic in nature (journal articles, books, conference proceedings or presentations, etc.). The remaining two can be informative or opinion-based (news stories, teacher briefs, websites, blogs, newsletters, etc.).
4. An action plan for future teaching practices. This may include plans for immediate application or long-term ideas for future implementation. The actions must be relatively concrete rather than vague thoughts about doing more research or trying something out to see if it works (both of which are vital to any improvement and ought to go without saying).

Topics of Teaching Concern
Choose one of the following topics for each log book essay. Feel free to modify and tailor the topic to your specific situation. You may also choose to create your own topic for any and all of the log book
assignments. If you choose to do this at any time, allow the following topics to offer some guidance in topic selection.

- How can I effectively lesson plan and avoid teacher "burn out"?
- What can I do if my students look bored and are falling asleep? Ideas for contingency plans.
- How can I connect better with my students?
- How can I learn from other teachers?
- What are some strategies for handling team teaching?
- How can I handle a rowdy, distracted, or defiant student?
- Teacher-talk vs. Student-talk: where's the balance?
- Student autonomy: how can I help my students be less dependent on me?
- Help! My students "hijacked" the lesson and now we've gone off the lesson plan. What should I do?
- Understanding and handling cultural differences among students.
- What can I do if one or two students are dominating the class discussion?
- Are my instructions complicated or clear? How can I give effective instructions?
- Am I letting my students struggle too long or am I forcing them to work it out? Where's the balance?
- How do I know how much homework I should assign? Is it too much or too little?
- How can I work effectively with administrators?
- What are some tips for creating a meaningful assessment?
- My students seem to be at different language levels within the class level. How can I handle this?

**Submission and Due Dates**
Submit each of the six essays on Learning Suite. Due dates are posted on the LS schedule and roughly correspond to every other Wednesday. Given that schedule, you will have approximately two weeks to complete each log book assignment and compose the associated essay.

**Evaluation**
Your essay will be graded based on the following rubric.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Pts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Completeness of the assignment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● All essay elements are included, especially academic sources</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Sufficient information is provided to explicate the topic, the advice, and the action plan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Essay is practical and future-thinking, not philosophical in nature or representative of past success</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depth of insight offered</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Essay demonstrates sophisticated thinking</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Writing is genuine and serious about the topic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Insights reveal mature introspection and research rather than reliance on base intuition or previous teaching accomplishments</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarity, Accuracy, and Formatting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Essay is 2 pages</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● APA style is used throughout, including references</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● The essay demonstrates effective punctuation, spelling, word choice, and language use</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX B

Reflective Teaching Questionnaire

Name: ________________________

Directions: Please answer the following questions to the best of your ability or current knowledge. Your participation is voluntary and you may choose not to answer any of the questions. The information you provide will be kept confidential in a password-protected file. Your answers to these questions will also have no effect on your grade in the LING 611 course.

1. How would you define or describe reflective teaching?

2. Why would you use reflective teaching in your personal teaching experiences?

3. What benefits or disadvantages can you perceive in reflective teaching?
APPENDIX C

Focus Group Script and Discussion Prompts

"Thank you for being willing to join this focus group. I want to emphasize the importance of keeping information discussed in the focus group confidential. You have signed a confidentiality form stating this.

"The only people with access to the data collected are myself and my thesis committee. All names will be changed in order to protect your identity. All recordings and transcripts of this focus group will be kept for the length of time required by the IRB (three years) and then will be destroyed afterwards. Are there any questions before we begin?"

[questions from participants, if any]

I will then begin the discussion with any of the following prompts. Notes will be taken on the whiteboard to serve as a discussion guide.

- What has been your experience so far with reflective teaching journals?
- What benefits do you feel the journals have?
- What disadvantages do you feel the journals have?
- What aspect of the reflective teaching journals has been most helpful to you?
- Which aspect of your teaching has the reflective teaching journals most helped?
- What have been your experiences so far with class discussions on reflective teaching?
- What benefits do you feel you have gained from the discussions?
- What disadvantages do you feel you have gained from the discussions?

"Thank you for your willingness to participate in this focus group. As a reminder, I ask that you do not discuss the material shared here outside of this group. Are there any questions?"

[questions from participants if any]
APPENDIX D

Interview Script and List of Possible Questions

"Thank you for being willing to be interviewed. I want to emphasize that all information discussed in the interview will be kept confidential. The interview will be recorded in order to capture the points discussed and to not allow the note taking to hamper the conversation. The only people with access to the raw data collected will be myself and my thesis committee. Names of those being interview will be changed in order to protect anonymity. All recordings and transcripts of this interview will be kept for the time period recommended by the IRB which is three years. Are there any questions before we begin?"

[questions from participant, if any]

I will then begin the interview by asking any of the following questions.

- In the focus group, you said [quote from participant]. Can you expound on that?
- In your reflective journal, you wrote [quote from participant]. Can you expound on that?
- During a [class/small group] discussion, you said [quote from participant]. Can you expound on that?
- Is reflective teaching a practice you would continue after the course of this class? Why or why not?
- Has being a reflective teacher made you more self-aware in the classroom? Why or why not?
- How would you adjust or modify the assignment of reflective teaching journals?
- What do you think is the correlation between reflective teaching journals and class discussions of the journals?

"Thank you for your willingness to participate in this interview. As a reminder, the information you shared will be kept confidential. Do you have any questions?"

[questions from participant if any]