

## THE IMPORTANCE OF REFLECTIVE WRITING IN EAP

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### ABSTRACT

Many kinds of research have been done to explain the role of reflective writing in EAP. Reflective writing is one of the ways of observing, analyzing, and comprehending the given or taught materials deliberately. It is thought to be an appropriate assessment of practices in Higher Education, “reflection is closely associated with the growing emphasis higher education puts on lifelong learning (Scales, 2008). Although the chosen articles approach reflective writing from different angles, the similar target unites them. Integrating systematic reflection into academic English courses encouraged teacher and student learning (Hale K. & Aysegul D., 2018). A pedagogical toolkit is supposed to be the main factor in realizing disciplinary expectations from reflective writing (Steve K., 2015).

**Keywords:** importance, reflective, writing, English, academic, purpose.

### Introduction

Reflective writing carried out using Edmodo could be an effective pedagogy for learning English (Anisha S., 2018). In higher education, reflective writing has become a common form of assessment (Simon W., 2019). Especially ESP learners of higher education have practiced reflective writing as a tool of developing their profession (Linda et al., 2018; Fiona T. & Freda N., 2017). Also, the resources used by students should be suitable developed materials in EAP that would maintain the pedagogical and theoretical expectations (Ben F-S., 2017). In this literature review, the most information was available on how reflective writing enhances learner knowledge with additional studies including practical ways to develop reflective writing.

### Background history of reflective writing

Examining the history of reflective writing makes clear that people naturally turned to reflective writing not only to record experiences but to clarify thinking and emotions. They were often in the form of diaries, for instance, the Civil War diary of Mary Chesnut (1823-1886). By the mid-twentieth, there was a need for a therapeutic journal that describes remedies. In the 1960s, New York City Psychologist Ira Progoff developed an

elaborate system that covered the writer's experience. For example, Tristina Rainer's *The new diary: How to Use a Journal for Self-Guidance and Expanded Creativity*. The linguistic characteristics of reflective writing tend to be unlike most other genres requiring personal and emotional voice, "contrasting sharply with the explicitness of argument development and logic in the service of 'academic truth' characteristic of essay writing" (Lillis, 2001, p. 81). In looking from research insights to pedagogical practice, reflective writing is a pedagogical toolkit. It enables students to select and arrange knowledge through a piece of academic writing.

### Reflective writing in teaching productively

There are different frameworks for reflective writing (The Gibb's reflective cycle, The Kolb experimental learning cycle, Rolfe, Freshwater, and Jaspers' model of reflection) that students might be scaffolded through successive stages of cognitive challenge and engagement. It can be argued that the desire to facilitate the implementation of the outcomes of reflective writing is a central idea. However, reflecting they would not distinguish content or knowledge, it would be impossible to distinguish students' reflective writing from the pedagogic context. Moreover, *semantic gravity* (the extent to which knowledge practices are related to their social or symbolic context of an acquisition or use) and *semantic gravity waves* were introduced as new tools. These tools, with their focus on relative strength, demonstrate that the stronger the gravity, the more meaning is dependent on its context; the weaker the gravity, the less dependent meaning is on its context. Nonetheless, they were also insufficient to obtain higher grades because identifying skills and insights from personal experience would vary. "Reflective learning is personal learning and very subjective, and thus it is difficult to determine criteria to assess it" (Bourner, 2003).

The *constructivist* theory, which was used as a framework, was quite an unusual reflection. It was presented as an interactive reflection model that students and teachers engage in a two-way process of reflection (Hale H., & Aysegul D., 2018). They reflected not only writing but also inner speech that facilitated reflective thinking. It is possible to say that reflecting with students and students' reflections contributed to teacher professional development. But making judgments based on students' opinions, too many reflective activities could be time-consuming. The number of written reflection tasks should be decreased so students would not lose their motivation.

The continuous revision and evolution of the recent learning theories have developed *Connectivism*. It could result

from the changes in the way of living, communicating, and learning because of the technology (Siemens, 2005). Students are given the liberty to use the platform Edmodo on the internet to carry out their research that reflective writing coupled with the Connectivism theory (Anisha S., 2018). Although using Edmodo formulated as an effective pedagogy for learning reflective writing, it is an online platform that students can be unsure of what to do and have to access via appropriate mobile devices. There is not enough evidence of its efficacy since the Edmodo has experimented with a limited number of students.

### **Reflective writing as part of assessment in Higher Education.**

Students' subjectivity would be explored with reflective writing that communicates the author's private and public self. The reflection should reflect *persona* and *ethos*, and according to the findings, teachers need to develop students' *persona*. It was noted that many students possessed a negative self-image, and lack of self-confidence when it comes to writing skills, believing that they are bad writers (Fernstan & Reda, 2011). There is a link between reflection and self-assessment, and they cannot be different ideas. Higher Education Institutions tend to maintain and improve students' positions in league tables and promote self-confidence, critical thinking, creativity, engagement, active participation, etc. Furthermore, by reflective writing, learners are expected to be self-critical and self-diagnosing for improvement. By creating the 'University Service Reflection Task' (USRT), students are encouraged to take responsibility for their learning.

### **Reflective writing and ESP**

In ESP, reflective writing is cited as a practical and valuable tool in professional development. A structural model of reflection was used in nursing, which improved the quality of students' reflective assignments (Fiona T. & Freda N., 2012). Preparing students in advance with models appears to influence the performance of some students positively. Although students ought to be encouraged to incorporate a clear structure of reflection and engage in all phases of the cycle, some students expressed concern that the use of reflection within the assessment was suboptimal.

Reflective writing is also accepted as a tool of implementation. Midwifery students are believed to optimize the learning potential of practice-based experiences by enhancing capacity in reflective practice through writing. The Bass Model of Holistic reflection was introduced to promote the development of reflective capacity. The results also demonstrated

that the intervention showed substantial improvement in reflective capacity when introduced to students with prior experience of reflection (Linda et al., 2018). With further testing and adaptation, the Bass Model may also have the potential to develop reflective capacity in students and practitioners across a range of health and social care disciplines. These recent studies have begun to consider the rapid development of digital technology and intent to balance time-consuming procedures.

### Conclusion

The purpose of this review was to view the importance of reflective writing in EAP. The descent occurrence of reflective writing proves that it usually started with autobiography and developed a critical approach via teacher comment or peer discussion. It is clear from the articles that with the help of different frameworks, the intention of academics was to provide the best optimum learning environment for students to enhance reflective writing fluency. Along with this, it is also clear that written reflection also enabled teachers to observe the reflection process behind students' writings. In implementing reflective writing as a mandatory task in higher education, students were expected to balance subjectivity and critical analyses. This field of inquiry is critical as its center is concern with helping students to become good analytics.

It is pretty noticeable in ESP that learners improved their self-awareness, source of knowledge, and critical reflection. However, structured models of reflective writing restricted comprehensive attitude. More research and testing are required to understand better why ESP learners should be encouraged to incorporate a clear structure of reflection. Helping students become better reflective writers and getting students to see the importance of reflective writing is vital in our current education with declining students' *persona* and lack of appropriate teaching methods in higher education.

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