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Reflective Journal Writing as a Tool for Teachers' Professional Development: The Case of EFL Teachers at Naama University Centre.

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DEDICATION

To my lovely mother, to my hero my father, to my source of power dear fiancée, to my great sisters and brothers, and a special thank goes to my best friends Fatima and Houari for being with me all the time, to all of them "you are the best".

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ABSTRACT

In response to globalization as well as, higher accountability demands, expectations of teacher's roles are changing. Consequently, reflective teaching or becoming critical of oneself has gained importance in the professional practice of English language teachers. In the present study the researcher attempts to investigate the impact of using reflective journals to promote English as a foreign language (EFL) teacher's professional development. Being a case study, this research work involves two data gathering techniques; essentially an interview conducted with Naama university center (NUC) EFL teachers in addition to the analysis of their journals. Furthermore, the research instruments were carefully designed to result in both quantitative and qualitative data, which are then analysed using both statistical and verbal procedures. The results obtained revealed that reflective journals are widely incorporated among EFL teachers. Additionally, the gathered data demonstrated that journal writing has a crucial impact on EFL teachers' critical thinking over theirown performance, which contributed in developing their practices, methodology used, and teaching strategies.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CPD: Continuous Professional Development

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

ESP: English for Specific Purposes

ICT: Information and Communication Technology

NUC: NAAMA University Center

TPD: Teacher's Professional Development

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The process which combines teachers learning, learning how to learn, transforming knowledge into practice for students' growth, in addition to the activities in which teachers engage during the course in order to enhance their work is broadly perceived as continuing professional development .

Teachers' professional development (TPD) is recognised as a key vehicle through which to enhance teaching, and in turn to improve students' achievements. It is defined as a framework of learning and development, which contributes to continued effectiveness as a professional. Yet this might be a deceptively simple description of a huge contested intellectual process, which often entails dissimilar strategies and standards for teacher's development.

Nevertheless, one aspect of teacher's education that continually receives attention in both curriculum and research for teachers' professional development is the way teachers think about their practice i.e., reflecting over their work. Reflective teaching is a process whereby teachers reflect over their teaching practices, analyzing how something was taught, and how to improve a specific practice or altering it for better learning outcomes. Moreover, reflection is viewed as a basic part of teaching and learning processes that endeavours to make teachers more aware of their own professional knowledge and actions by challenging assumptions of everyday practice and critically evaluating their own progress.

Significantly, the main question, is how can teachers put their reflective practice into action? Reflective journal is one of the forms of reflective practice that teachers use for the sake of reflecting on their teaching, and then generating feedback for the enhancement of their classroom performance through describing and examining teaching situations. Therefore, the research problem set out to this inquiry is "how can reflective journaling promote EFL teacher's professional development at NUC?" This problematic have been carved up into these two sub questions?

- Do EFL teachers of Salhi Ahmed university use journaling to reflect on their teaching performance?
- How can journals help teachers to reflect on their teaching performance?

In order to respond to the previous sub questions the investigator has proposed two different hypotheses that follow

- EFL teachers at Naama University Center may rely on reflective journaling for developing their teaching performance.
- Journaling would allow teachers to step back and continuously evaluate, examine and think purposefully and systematically about their practice so that they understand then develop and improve their teaching performance.

To investigate this problematic situation, eleven (11) teachers from Naama university center were randomly chosen as a sample population using a mixed - method approach which include the joint use of both qualitative and quantitative approaches for the sake of collecting complementary data. Furthermore, the researcher has selected two different research instruments, which are a conducted interview with teachers, in addition to the analysis of teacher's journals in order to figure out their opinions, experiences, and benefits from using journaling in their career.

Aiming at investigating the usefulness of journaling for promoting teachers professional development; this research work is an attempt to hopefully provide valuable data in two chapters. The first chapter represent the literature related to both the notion of journaling as tool to promote teachers professional development and reflective teaching as a mediator between both concepts. The second chapter includes both data collection and analysis, where the former's procedures will answer the research questions, and test the proposed hypothesis. Whereas, the latter will provide the results and interpretations, along with some suggestions and recommendations.

Chapter one:
Literature Review

Chapter One: Literature Review

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1.1. Introduction

Reflective Practice in the field of EFL has been wildly embraced in many teacher education and improvement programs worldwide. However, teachers are still facing a crucial problem that is how reflection can be performed in the teaching process in order to promote professional development.

The present chapter aims at shedding some light on some key concepts including an overview about reflective practice, its types, models, dimensions and levels. Furthermore, reflective journals are also introduced in details with its forms procedures. Finally, the last key concept tackled will be professional development.

1.2. Reflective Practice

One of the aspects of teacher's education that persistently receives attention in curriculum and research is the way teachers think about their practice. Since at least the time of Dewey who made tremendous impact on education by introducing the idea of the scientific methods to scaffold how people think and learn and how teachers ought to use reflection as means of developing personal and professional practice; such thinking about practice has been referred to as 'reflection'.

Reflection comes from the Latin word *reflectere* (to bend back) and which Hanks (1979: 1227) usefully defines as 'to think, meditate or ponder'. If this definition will be taken as a working hypothesis, it can be said that reflective practice is concerned with the teacher thinking. Yet, reflective practice is more than a self-awareness process in which the individual pause and think back after something has happened.

Dewey said that reflective thinking is caused by some difficulty, uncertainty or doubt, and he pointed out that real reflective thinking is hard and uncomfortable:

> **"Reflective thinking is always more or less troublesome because it involves overcoming the inertia that inclines one to accept**

suggestions at their face value; it involves willingness to endure a condition of mental unrest."(Dewey, 1910:13).

1.3. Types of Reflection

According to Tony Ghaye (2011),reflective practice has known four major kinds that are often referred to in both practice and in the literature of reflection shown in (Table 1.1). Each kind of reflection has its particular function; hence teachers are required to use more than one kind in order to know about themselves first, their work or their workplace and more particularly when the will try to do something differently or better.

KINDS OF REFLECTION	MEANINGS
A. Reflection-IN-action	1. In a particular workplace 2. Thinking on your feet, improvisation
B. Reflection-ON-practice	1. After the event 2. On something significant
C. Reflection-for-action	1. For a reason or particular purpose 2. Planning what you are going to do
D. Reflection-with-action	1. Conscious future action 2. Action alone or with others

TABLE 1.1: Four of the More Common Views of Reflection

(Tony Ghaye,2011)

Understanding reflection and the practices of it soon takes us to the work of Donald Schön (1983) in his book "*The Reflective Practitioner*" where he developed the ideas of reflection IN-action and reflection-ON-practice.

1.3.1. Reflection-In-Action.

This in fact has two meanings. In one hand, it means reflection in a specific context or workplace. For instance, in a classroom, an office, leisure centers, a home, a factory and so on. In the other hand, it can mean thinking about what you are doing, while you are really doing it, and it is wildly known as 'thinking on your

feet'. Much of this can happen unconsciously i.e. you may be unaware that you are doing it. For example, when a teacher asks a student a question, then he/she quickly recognizes from the student's face that she /he does not understand what he has just said, so the teacher finds himself re- phrasing the question in his mind and asking it again. This happens rapidly, in the heat of the moment. Thus, reflection-in-action is to make on-the-spot adjustments to what is going in the midst of the action and not two or three days afterwards.

1.3.2. Reflection- on-action.

This kind has also two different meanings. It might mean reflecting after the experience which means after one or two days. That is to say, thinking over something that has already happened. This type of reflection is correlated with the notion of time when the event has already taken place. Additionally, it can refer to focusing on a significant experience. This may be tricky because it differs from a person to another in regard to what is really considered as 'significant'. Therefore, the teacher in this case should be selective by asking himself what's important in what I am passing through? Or ,what did catch my attention and remained in my memory? Because it is unwise and not healthy or necessary to think about every single detail. Eraut calls this 'time-out reflection'.

1.3.3. Reflection-For-Action.

This kind of reflection which is sometimes termed as 'anticipatory reflection'; refers to reflecting about a past event that someone have been involved in or even observed for the sake of better understand it or know more about it, change it or improve it; these are good reasons why a teacher may think over his work or that of his/her colleges. Moreover, this kind of reflection is also about planning to take some steps to do something with what the teacher have already learned. This planning is a crucial aspect because there is a quite distinction between planning for an action and the action itself. For example, a teacher may see and think that something is different or better, however putting these thoughts into practice, in the classroom, is fairly different.

1.3.4. Reflection-With-Action.

This type of reflection can be explained in two ways as well. First, it is mainly about acting consciously for the reason of developing one's understanding, or skills through analyzing the options someone have, or to take a decision to act in a particular way in the future. Likewise, the 'with' part means acting alone or with others. Nevertheless, there are limits to learning and acting alone due to the fact that the power of changing and improving anything is better achieved by a group or team rather than individually.

1.4. Models of Reflective Practice

The present work represents five models which have explored how diverse writers have tackled the process of reflection, its applications, in addition to how those models might be used to reflect on the professional practices in teaching.

The first model will be Dewey's model which might be considered as one of the first in modern times to contended for the centrality of reflection in teaching and learning, in his 'stages of reflection'. Then the next model is devoted for the work of another writer influenced by Dewey's work; Schön's 'reflection in action – reflection on action' model, the third work is the one of a writer working in the tradition of Dewey – Boud, and his model of reflective learning.. The last two models presented are related directly to teaching; the 'critical incidents' model of Tripp and that of the 'critical lenses' model of Brookfield. These models have been emphasised in the discussion because as their names implies, they introduce the element of 'criticality' into reflective practice.

1.4.1. Dewey's Phases of Reflective Practice:

Dewey has categorized reflection in five main phases which he claimed that are not essentially to occur in any particular order but should fit together to form the process of reflective thinking. The five phases are suggestions, problem, hypothesis, reasoning, and testing.

Suggestions are the ideas or predictions which may spring to the mind of a teacher when he/she is in front of a puzzling situation, hence the more suggestions he/she will provide, the greater she/he will need to delay judgment and consider each preposition in an appropriate manner. Therefore, suggestions are crucial for further inquiry.

Problem or intellectualization phase; this is a crucial step according to Dewey because it makes the difference between 'reflection proper' and 'uncontrolled thinking'. Dewey warns that at this level it is significant to defer judgements and not make any hasty conclusions about the real reason behind difficulty.

Moreover, the hypothesis phase demonstrates highlighting the function of a reconsidered suggestion in terms of what can be done with it or how it can be used. Acting on a working hypothesis implies carful observations by taking into consideration more information, and how the hypothesis stands up to tentative testing.

Furthermore, reasoning is linking the information with the prior experiences in order to expand on suggestions, hypotheses, and tests to extend the thinking about knowledge of the subject.

Testing refers to the phase in which the hypothesized suggestions are tested to use the result of this testing either to corroborate (or negate) the conjectural idea. Overt testing in fact gives the teacher the opportunity to find out how well he/she has thought about the problem situation.

1.4.2. Schön's 'Reflection In Action – Reflection On Action' Model

Schön (1983; 1987) professedly working in the same tradition of Dewey in highlighting the uncertainties inherent in people's decision making. Schon has focused on the complexities of professional practices and more specifically "teaching profession" and how professionals handle such issues.

Schön was critical of what was known as 'technical-rationalism', which refers to the fact of 'one best way' is found to carry out a particular task, which was adopted in every time and under all circumstances. He claimed that professional practices are complicated, contingent and even 'messy', and teachers should not lend themselves to that 'technical' approach that was merely influenced by 'systems' and 'behaviourists' theories that touched many parts of the professional practice (Armitage et al. 2007). For Schön, the professional practitioner is well-informed in a unique way and demonstrates his/her knowledge through 'reflection in action', being spontaneous, inventive and distinctive when the practitioner experiences 'puzzlement 'or 'confusion' in a situation and an 'experiment' is carried out generating a new understanding of the situation which will allow the teacher to discover an assortment of classroom management skills, experimenting solutions with different situation and memorized if have been proved.

1.4.3. Boud, Keogh And Walker's Experiential Model of Reflection

Boud et al.'s model (1985) is quite similar to Schön's model in the same path of Dewey. According to Boud, Keogh and Walker reflection may take place due to a 'loss of confidence' or 'disillusionment' in one's situation(p. 19), despite the fact that reflection might also be 'prompted' by more positive incident, like effectively finishing a hard task. For Boud et al. reflection is purely a response to a specific experience. As a result, they have divided the model into two main parts: the first part represents the experience itself and the second denotes the reflection process of that facing experience. Hence; Boud et al. suggested three levels known respectively as, 'returning to experience', 'attending to feelings' and 're-evaluating the experience'.

In the first stage, the practitioner will recollect what happened and which may be either the reason behind the 'loss of confidence' or even a recent success. Boud et al. Claimed out that as one begins to 'think over the past experience, ignored details will surely come to light. Boud et al. Shed lights on the importance of 'stepping back' after the experience and taking time to react toward it instead of acting at the real time

The following stage was under the name of 'attending to feelings'. Despite the fact that they have admitted that they are working in the tradition of Dewey, they claimed that they give much interest to the 'affective aspects of learning' (p. 21) i.e., emotional feelings owing to the fact that the former can become 'barriers to learning' and they can 'override rationality'. Moreover 'positive feelings' also can be used to provide the practitioner with the 'impetus to persist' in challenging situations.

The third and the final stage is that of 're-evaluating the experience'. This again was broken out into four components which are 'association', 'integration', 'validation' and 'appropriation'. For Boud et al. 'association' can be identified as linking the ideas and feelings of both the original experience and reflection with existing knowledge and attitude. Boud et al. note that these associations can be 'indiscriminate' in other words it requires further analysis to testify its correctness, hence this stage has been labelled as 'integration' because it integrates both the new knowledge and feelings into a 'new whole'.

The next component is 'validation', in which the practitioner will test the consistency between the new and the old knowledge then trying the new one in the upcoming situations. 'Appropriation' is the last element at this stage and this is where the practitioner's new knowledge becomes part of her/his 'value system'. Boud et al. emphasized strongly the fact that reflection only is not enough. The new learning however, must be put into action. Hence, they argued there is a 'continuing cycling back and forth between elements'. Reflective learning is an ongoing process.

1.4.4. Tripp's Critical Incidents Theory

Tripp's critical incidents theory is considered as the first of two remarkable theories of reflective practice noticeable for being concerned with the professional practice of teaching. Tripp (1993) argued that teachers should develop their understanding of the teaching process along side with their professional development through exploring the various incidents that take place in the daily

work; hence, a crucial teaching incident is the one that is interpreted by the teacher as a challenging situation. Consequently, he/she will look for reasons and consequences for such incident. The first step that a teacher should initiate is specifying the critical incident that might be an everyday event that occurs in the classroom or workshop. After choosing a critical incident, the teacher provides a careful description of it through the followings:

> ➢ Who was involved?
> ➢ Where did it happen?
> ➢ What actually happened?
> ➢ What the teacher's reaction to the incident?

Once the description is made, the analysis of the incident should follow. The first question to ask is 'why' the incident did happened; was it the learning environment itself, the classroom or workshop? Or it might be the learners, something to do with the nature of the group, the capacity and attainment levels or their motivation to learn. Or it might not be the group *per se* but some individuals within it. The incident may be related as well to the subject or topic.

Similarly to Boud et al. Tripp is cautious to reveal that reflection is a cyclical process which begins with the observation of a given situation through which the teacher 'establishes' the critical incident and then he/she plans and then apply an appropriate response to be finally followed by an observation of its effects before creating another critical incident.

1.4.5. Brookfield's 'Critical Reflection'

In his theory Brookfield stressed the fact that 'teaching can never be 'innocent' (1995: 1). Innocence according to Brookfield refers to the idea that teachers always understand what they are doing and what affects their teaching, furthermore, he added that it is an assumption that the meanings and significance that teachers put on their actions are the ones the learners put on them, and that this innocence is at best naïve, and at worst it is damaging. Additionally, Brookfield

(1995) argues that most teaching problems engendered by innocence can be prevented if teachers are questioning their assumptions frequently throughout a critical reflection process which should be a process of 'hunting assumptions' where he referred to "assumptions" as the 'taken for granted' beliefs about the world (1995: 2).

Brookfield not only offers a model of reflective practice in teaching, but also an obvious rationale for engaging in critical reflection:

- ✓ It helps us take informed actions: Brookfield argues that an informed action has improved possibility of achieving the results anticipated.
- ✓ It helps us develop a rationale for practice: The teacher can provide the reasons behind their actions in their professional practice to others, mainly students and colleagues,
- ✓ It helps us avoid self-laceration: and to acknowledge that as teachers we are not responsible for everything that goes wrong. Brookfield notes a tendency in teachers to take responsibility for everything!
- ✓ It grounds teachers emotionally: It enables teachers to attain an emotional stability in their professional practice.
- ✓ It enlivens our classrooms: Brookfield declares that considering a teacher as a model critical enquiry, is useful for learners to think critically.
- ✓ It increases democratic trust: up to Brookfield the teacher who reflects critically will give great consideration to his/her learner's 'voice' in the learning setting, so that he/she shows their importance, and thus increase their trust on him/her.

To sum up, the five models have many points in common; mainly, all of them acknowledge that today's world is a rapidly-changing, complicated place, and what should be learnt from it is inevitably contingent and has to be continually reviewed. Yet, teaching as a professional practice is not an exception, and as a result, each of the models has offered a great importance to teacher's reflective practice.

1.5. Reflective Teaching Dimensions

Reflective practice as a process embraces various concepts, mainly in relation to the nature of reflective activity for the sake of professional practice. These have been summarized in a set of inter-related dimensions, represented in (Figure1.1). Although, they are presented in a sequential manner, it is important to note down that any dimension can offer the initial catalyst for reflective practice.
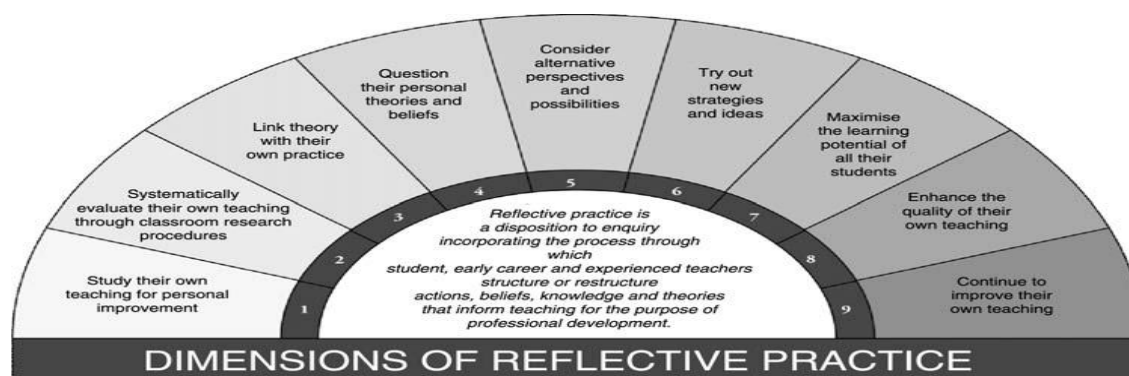
FIGURE 1.1: Dimensions of Reflective Practice (Andrew Green,2011)

1) Study theirown teaching for personal improvement   :

This dimension sought to elucidate how reflection becomes a influential means for understanding 'self ', as teachers, describe what they have observed and thought about a particular context , in addition to their feelings, emotions and ideas as to 'future possibilities'.

2) Systematically evaluate theirown teaching through classroom research procedures:

Based on the belief that the teacher is a researcher where a systematic reflection on one's classroom experience to understand it and to create meaning out of that understanding is wildly needed. Systematic reflection on data collected from lesson-by-lesson in order to figure out the real cause of specific outcomes that have been realized in relation to a particular strategy is the hallmark of action research, which Carr and Kemmis (1986: 162) have described as a "self-reflective spiral of cycles of planning, acting, observing, reflecting then re-planning, further action, further observation and further reflection".

3) Link theory with theirown practice:

According to Campbell *et al.* 2003, striving toward relating theory with practice requires research minded teachers that are encouraged to value and carry out research within professional contexts. Besides being able to analyse critically the research evidence they read as part of their professional role, and to evaluate its results and conclusions from a well informed view point.

 4) Question their personal theories and beliefs:

Generally teachers tend to have some personal theories and beliefs about the knowledge they will deliver, their duties and responsibilities in the classroom, and how learning should be. According to Zeichner and Liston (1996) those personal theories and beliefs will be accurate once the teacher will engage in the process of reflection. Predetermined judgements, Biases or views and issues can be determined, challenged and properly adapted, because the lack of the re-examination of personal theories and beliefs to test their validity in light of new information can lead to meaningless teaching or habitual practice (Mezirow 1990).

 5) Consider alternative perspectives and possibilities:

 It is important to know that interpretation refers to a meaning-making process, which necessitates teachers to recognise that any problem is perceived as a human construct which comes out of a given perception or interpretation shaped over a particular educational context. Freire (1972) emphasised the importance of teacher's adoption of reflective posture, and the examination of personal experience through discussions with others. Within her three-stage approach, Pendlebury (1995) as well has argued how discussions between students and teachers can be planned in order to permit exploration of classroom situations , and how they might frame ,and then solve problems of practice.

6) Try out new strategies and ideas:

 Teachers have to stay upto date with the newest trends that can have major effect on the various aspects of the curriculum and classroom contexts (e.g. awareness of global issues, living in multi-cultural societies, issues of gender and sexuality, rapid advances in ICT).

In other words, the integration of new strategies and ideas into teaching, enable teachers to take control over their teaching as they acquire new knowledge, which

raises their autonomy to be able to make professional judgements towards classroom incidents.

7) Maximise the learning potential of all their students:

Both of entitlement and inclusion principles are pivotal elements of this dimension, despite the fact that this can be greatly challenging within twenty-first-century schools where teachers are asked to cope with an increasingly various needs, learning styles and diverse aspirations of different students. Hence, strong emphasis is given to 'personalised learning' nowadays which entails that teachers adapt learning to accommodate the various needs and interests of learners in order to ensure that all of them have reached their full potential. Some strategies that teachers my accommodate for the aim of targeting individual achievements include accelerated learning, assessment for learning, booster classes or goal setting

8) Enhance the quality of theirown teaching:

According to Shulman (1987), this dimension is closely related to the preceding one as it is based on the principle that 'what teachers teach' is as essential as 'how they really teach'. Therefore, teachers have to maintain a variety of knowledge bases and models that will be transformed later on into meaningful learning experiences, in addition to reflecting on session's outcomes and how efficiently they have been accomplished.

9) Continue to improve theirown teaching:

Continuous professional development is extremely vital to supply teachers with knowledge and understanding of the ever-changing necessities of educational reform. Moreover, Day (1999: 4) proposes that continuous professional development is the process whereby teachers review re-establish and extend their commitments either individually or with others, for the sake of developing critically the knowledge needed.

1.6. Levels of Reflection

Ian Rushton and Martin Suter suggest that there are three distinct, but not mutually exclusive levels of reflection known as:

I. ***Technical reflection***: refers *to* the teacher's reflection upon his/her own teaching, including the used 'techniques' of planning, teaching and learning, teaching and learning strategies, the use of teaching and learning resources, assessing learning and supporting individual learners. It is probable that the teacher will reflect on the following aspects of their own practice:

The planning and preparation of learning: In this case the teacher may take into consideration: adequate aims and objectives, learner's needs, learning activities, sequencing and logical order, and the teaching and learning resources and materials.

The introduction of the learning session: At this level the teacher will reflect on whether the aims and objectives for the session had been communicated to the learners, and whether as a result they understood what was expected of them.

Communication: This concerns communication between the teacher and the learner and between the learners. Additionally, he/she will also think about the quality of written communication, for instance on the whiteboard or flipchart.

Group management: Reflection at this stage will be on how confidently and fairly behavioural issues: 'is the learning engaging all individuals in the group?' 'Are there issues of relevance of learning?''Is the learning too difficult for an individual learner or not challenging enough?'

Teaching and learning methods: Reflection here will be upon the appropriateness of the methods applied to achieve the objectives set for the session and to what extent it meets the learning needs of both the group and individual learners within it.

Teaching and learning resources: As with methods, the teacher is likely to reflect on the degree to which the resources used in helped in the accomplishment of the stated objectives.

Assessment and feedback: The main point teachers may reflect on is the effectiveness of the methods used in the assessment of learner's knowledge and understanding, in addition to ability of the feedback given to learners on their performance and/or progress to improve their knowledge and skills.

II. ***Organizational***: At this level the teacher will reflect on the organization of teaching and learning, which is different from the reflection undertaken at the 'technical' level, since it involves considering the decisions taken by others as well as oneself on a number of issues which may influence the quality of teaching and learning.

Course organization: This concerns issues such as consideration of the timetabling of the course, the preparation of the teaching and learning activities or even the duration given to the various activities.

Teaching and learning activities: This is a wider consideration of teaching and learning where the teacher may reflect on the teaching and learning activities on the course and thinks for some enhancement.

Teaching and learning resources: Here the teacher might reflect upon the quality, quantity and access to teaching and learning resources.

Learner support: The undertaken consideration at this stage will be about the support and help relevance the learners are receiving.

III. Critical: beyond the organizational factors which impinge upon the professional practice of the teacher in the wider FE sector, there is the influence of the social, political and economic contexts on teaching and learning. Several writers on the wider FE sector, for instance Avis (1999) Hodkinson (1998) and Suter (2007) argue that government policy decisions on the organization and funding of the sector have had a major impact on the teacher's role.

1.7. Structures to Promote Reflection

Reflection can take various forms and structures either through writing or conversations, individually or in pair or group reflection, or a combination of these. However, for practical reasons, most people capture their reflections in written forms such as diaries, post-it notes on lesson plans, journals, portfolio materials, poetry, sometimes short stories, novels or books.

Researchers however, indicate that reflective journals are the most popular form of reflection among teachers.

1.8. Reflective Journals

A reflective teaching journal is defined as an ongoing written account of remarks, reflections, and other views about teaching practice, typically in the form of a notebook, book, or electronic mode, which promotes a source of debate, reflection, or evaluation. Reflective journals are often used to document incidents, problems, and insights that occurred during a lecture for future analysis or reminders of things to take action on; and it may be a report of a specific class, significant aspects of lessons or school events that the teacher would like to re-examine or return to afterwards; or sometimes it can be a basis of further information that can be shared with other peers. Bartlett (1990: 2010) has provided the following suggestions about what to write (or record) for. "Our writing will be about our routine and conscious actions in the classroom; conversations with pupils; critical incidents in a lesson; our personal lives as teachers; our beliefs about teaching; events outside the classroom that we think influence our teaching; our views about language teaching and learning." According to Bartlett, reflective journals are documents that teachers rely on to record their daily work including the intended actions, discussions with their learners and critical situations in the classroom.

Journals come in any shape, size or form. They exist as the five-year diary with prescribed space for each day, they can be yellow sticky notes stuck on the

walls of a room, or they exist not on paper at all. They can be in electronic form on audio or videotape or in a word-processed format. The present work will represent four major divisions of journal writing.

The first form is the unstructured form of journals which serves at recording thoughts and refection of an ongoing event or issue. It includes both free and reflecting writing, the subject matter and work in the journal is the choice of the writer, though it may be that the writer is expected to write in a specified regular manner, or to a certain length. It is possible that the writer will impose her/his own structure , this form can include also 'double-entry journals' where one part of the journal is for recoding of the event or what happened, and on the other side the writer can write about his/her reflection on the written account of the experience.

Moreover, the second form is the structured forms of journal writing, which can be an 'autobiographical writing', portfolios or profiles. Reflective journal (and portfolios) should have the power to make the practitioner learn from his/her reflective practice, and show him/her the ways in which their practice progresses. By 'structure' it is meant any compulsory restrictions on the way in which a journal is written, this structure however, will aid the teacher to obtain greater benefits from the journal, additionally it ensures the appropriateness of the issues under reflection and help to 'move on' in their reflection and their teaching, consequently this may hinder them from 'going around in closed circles'. Generating reflection is an affecting experiences which may make the teacher feel uncomfortable at the first time, but the final outcome is that his/her knowledge and practice will be considerably improved and continue to develop.

Additionally, journal writing can take other variant form mainly web logs or blogs. When defining journals the researcher has mentioned electronic methods of writing journals above, and insists on the fact that although the format is not the same, most of the principles that apply to paper-based journals apply similarly and this is the case with blogs. Blogs are an innovation that are expected to take valuable place in the educational use in the near future, thus it is worth to shed some

lights on the subject. A web log or blog is a website through which the teacher or his students can write and edit their work via a web browser. What distinguishes this form from the other journals is the fact that it is public web-based and easy to be edited on the screen which gives the teacher an opportunity to modify what they see crucial as some information or links added into the accumulating material. Similarly, the blog can be added to at different times or by different people within a pre-determined group, and it is organized by the dates of the additions.

1.9. Procedures for Journal Writing

In order to carry out journal writing effectively, a number of factors and steps should be followed:

1. *Set goals for journal writing*: The teacher should decide on the main purpose of writing such journal and what he/she would like to get out of it.

2. *Decide who your audience is*? : In this step the teacher have ask him/her self some questions including; for whom am I writing this journal? for myself , for peers, or for a supervisor?

3. *Be prepared to set aside time for journal writing*: Journal writing activity needs specific time that teachers should set in prior for this activity.

4. *Set a time frame for the writing activity*: It's not required from a teacher to spend too much time scheduling and revising a journal entry. It is better simply to write without stopping for about 6 to 10 minutes without worrying about spelling, grammar, or organization.

5. *Review your journal entries regularly:* After finishing from writing a journal the teacher have to see what he/she can learn from it. It is important to review the final entries from time to time in order to make connections between the present one and the previous entries or to see what ideas and understanding emerge.

6. *Evaluate your journal writing experience:* The last step for the teacher is to assess his/ her journal regularly to see if it meets the intended goals.

1.10. The potential of Journaling for Developing Teaching Performance

Journal writing provides an opportunity for teachers to maintain a record of their classroom events and observations and without such a record. Teachers often have no extensive recollection of what had happened during a lecture and consequently, cannot draw conclusions over the experience of a successful (and sometimes unsuccessful) teaching as a source for further learning and teaching.

The process of writing about teaching practice events frequently affords new insights about those events, since it allows the teachers to question, explore, and analyze their teaching and therefore, enhance their ability to make decisions which show good judgement and growth in the capacity to generate innovation through the technique of asking open questions and attending to the answers with an open mind, aside from providing a basis for conversations with colleagues or a supervisor. Journal writing can serve various intentions, depending on who the audience for a journal is.

For teachers, a journal can often serve as a means of clarifying their own thinking and investigating their own ideas and practices. Furthermore, journal writing develop new skills, but at a deeper level it grows the capacity of the individual to respond to challenges, make timely decisions, manage emotions, conduct productive relationships and cope with stress.

Moreover, it provides a way of collaborating with other teachers in examining teaching issues; for peers, supervisors, and mentors, reading and then responding to a particular teacher's journal will encourage reflective inquiry and can ease managing problems and concerns; "Keeping a journal can also be beneficial when one or more colleagues share their journals and meet regularly to discuss them "(Brock, Yu, and Wong 1992). To put it in a nutshell, the most common use of journals in professional education is in the context of practice or in moving between classroom theory and situations of practice (Brookfield, 1995)

1.11. Professional Development

Professional development (or its variants 'staff development', 'teacher development, continuing professional learning, , or CPD) is a concept that was and still as one of the controversial and deceptive concepts in education that is often ill-defined. Day's (1999) has brought a clear definition for professional development that encompasses all behaviours and activities which are deliberated for an effective change in the classroom:

> **CPD consists of all natural learning experiences and those conscious and planned activities which are intended to be of direct or indirect benefit to the individual, group or school, which contribute, through these, to the quality of education in the classroom. It is the process by which, alone and with others, teachers review, renew and extend their commitment as change agents to the moral purpose of teaching; and by which they acquire and develop critically the knowledge, skills and emotional intelligence essential to good professional thinking, planning and practice"** (Day, 1999:4)

Day's definition shows that teacher's development can be in various ways, varying from the formal to the informal one .It can be done through external expertise in the form of courses, workshops or formal programmes through collaboration between schools or teacher schools for one crucial target that is teaching and learning enhancement.

In education, CPD has two fundamental views. The first known as the narrow view and the second is referred to as broad view. The former considers CPD as acquiring particular sets of skills and/or knowledge so as to cope with specific new requirements (for example, training teachers to implement a new textbook or using a new teaching aid). The latter however, identifies CPD as a profound, wild and longer-term procedure; in which professionals continuously improve not barely their knowledge and skills, but their thinking, understanding and maturity as well; hence, teachers grow not only as professionals, but also as individuals and their

development is not constrained to their work roles, but may also broaden to new roles and responsibilities (Padwad & Dixit, 2011).

1.12. Teacher's Professional Development

Teacher's professional development (TPD) is a powerful area of constant changes. Fraser et al. (2007) argued that TPD can be identified as the processes that will cause tremendous changes in the professional knowledge, skills, attitudes, beliefs or action of teachers Up to Reid's quadrants (Fraser et al., 2007), TPD opportunities involve two dimensions: formal-informal and planned-incidental.

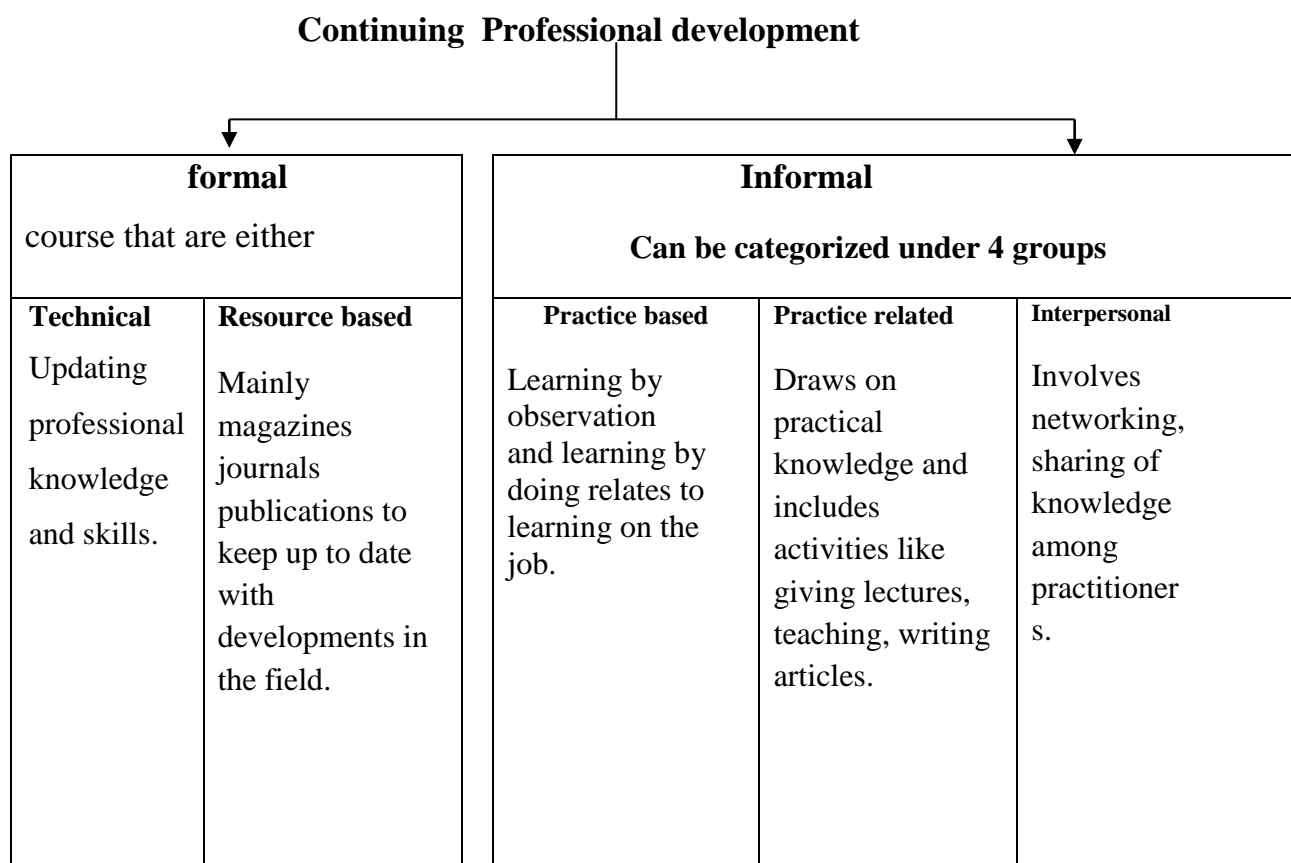Formal opportunities are those overtly founded by an agent rather than the teacher, for instance taught courses, while informal opportunities are sought and established by the teacher himself, for example, networking. On the other planned opportunities can be either formal or informal, but are typically pre-arranged, for example collaborative planning, whereas incidental opportunities are unplanned and unpredictable, like teacher interactions over coffee. These descriptions represent polarized positions that encompass the range of learning opportunities encountered by teachers. The quadrants are exemplified in (Figure 1.2).

Formal

*charted teachers modules   *assessment meetings

*mandatory courses   *sharing professional

*action research projects   experiences

*ill service coerces   * incidental conversations

                                            *network meetings

PLANNED   **INCEDENTAL**

*Joint strategic planning   *staff conversations

*Web based networking   *hallway/corridor discussions

                                            *Break rooms conversations

Informal

Figure1.2: Teacher Learning Quadrants (Fraser et al., 2007)

Continuing Professional development

formal	Informal		
course that are either	**Can be categorized under 4 groups**		

Technical	**Resource based**	**Practice based**	**Practice related**	**Interpersonal**
Updating professional knowledge and skills.	Mainly magazines journals publications to keep up to date with developments in the field.	Learning by observation and learning by doing relates to learning on the job.	Draws on practical knowledge and includes activities like giving lectures, teaching, writing articles.	Involves networking, sharing of knowledge among practitioners.

Figure1.3: Continuing Professional Development: Formal and Informal Activities (Wall & Ahmed, 2008).

(CPD) can be considered as the intended acquisition of knowledge, experience and skills and the development of the individual's own qualities needed for the implementation of professional and technical duties through a constructional professional life, embracing technical and non-technical matters. (Figure 1.3) outlines formal and informal activities (Wall & Ahmed).

Kennedy (2005), had organized the previous mentioned models into three broad categories: traditional, transitional, and transformative. This classification and organization of CPD models suggests boosting teacher's autonomy as he/she moves from transmission, through transitional to transformative stages.

1.13. Features of Professional Development

Effective professional development is the one which meets the following:

- **Personalized**: refers to the idea that the mentor should construct the model upon his/her recognized needs and requirements rather than one size fits all approach.

- **Relevant**: it should be related to the teaching theory and or subject specialism and the needs of the teacher's learners.

- **Sustained:** this means that new skills and ideas need time to be tackled; hence, experimentation and refinement is the best way to implement new ideas into the classroom practice.

- **Supported:** by coaching or mentoring from within from outside the school.

- **Collaborative:** while teaching is wildly considered as a solitary profession, collaborative work with other colleagues has been recognized as one of the most significant characteristics necessary for teacher learning.

1.14. Rationale for Continuous Professional Development

Constant changes in the working conditions of teachers together with an increased impact of information and communication technologies lead to the need for teachers to engage in professional development activities. Teachers, in the process of change in school, generally and in classrooms specifically, play key roles. Therefore, they should participate in training and development programs to become ready to accept changes and implement appropriate methods in classrooms (Angelides, 2002; Gillies, 2004; Roux & Ferreira, 2005). Craft (2000) stressed that teachers are under immense pressure to undertake specific development courses for improved quality teaching. CPD thus bears significance not only for the teachers involved but also for the learners, the institutions and subsequently for society at large.

 Furthermore, professional development is at the core of school improvement (Murphy, 2000). Hence, teachers can play a key role in making a difference in the quality of education. Fullan (1991), emphasized that continuous development for all

teachers is the cornerstone for meaning, improvement, and reforms. He pointed out that professional development and school development are inextricably linked and there was no single strategy that can contribute more to meaning and improvement than ongoing professional development.

1.15. Conclusion

This chapter was devoted for a theoretical overview on teacher's reflective practice highlighting its main dimensions, models, and levels in addition to a number of critical structures to promote reflection. Moreover, a set of crucial procedures for teachers to maintain reflective journals, together with its potential for developing teaching performance were offered as well.

Nonetheless, the following chapter will collect, then analyse and discuss the findings of each research instrument in addition to the interpretation of the main results according to the research questions and hypotheses previously raised.

Chapter Two:
Research Design and Procedures

Chapter Two: Research Design and Procedures

2.1. Introduction

2.2. Case Study

2.3. Research Approach

2.4. Sample Population

2.5. Research Instruments

    2.5.1. Interview

    2.5.2 Journal

2.6. Data Analysis

    2.6.1. Teacher's Interview Analysis

    2.6.2. Journal Analysis

2.7. Data Interpretation

2.8. Suggestions and Recommendations

2.9. Conclusion

2.1. Introduction:

Teachers' careers are usually full of many questions that tend to occupy tutors minds such as 'How do I know that what I am doing is working and fits best for my students?', or 'what is the evidence for what worked or did not work in my teaching'. Preoccupation with such questions generally occurs when teachers think about some possibilities or face specific situation that makes them feel that something is wrong or things did not work the way they assumed it would be.

Actually, it is undeniable that reflection and practice nurture one another in various ways in the teaching context. Therefore, this chapter is devoted for the description of the research design procedures and analysis. It attempts to investigate the way teachers use reflective journals to promote professional development involving the approaches used for collecting data, the sample population that has been selected for this inquiry, the research instruments and finally the data analyses and interpretation of the results.

2.2. Case Study

Case study is a research approach that is used to investigate a complex issue, phenomenon or a problem in its real-life context using a variety of methods and techniques. It is an established research design that is employed extensively in a wide variety of disciplines, particularly in social sciences. In the same vein Yin (1984:23) refers to case study research method as:

> **An empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used.**

Case study is commonly viewed as a research approach where one or a number of instances of a specific phenomenon are dealt with in depth. It is more concerned with explaining the specific mechanisms between cause and effect rather than enlightening the factors that cause an effect, thus it focuses on specific instance, item or phenomenon in action and tries to answer or suggest how and why

something occurred. Therefore, the main purpose sets out to the case study research is to place the factors that are responsible for the behavioural patterns of an individual or group.

Yin (1984) has classified case studies under three main types and claims that the selected type will depend on the way the research is conducted in addition to the purpose of the research itself. Yin differentiates between three major kinds of case studies (J. McDonough and S. McDonough, 2006):

➢ Exploratory: seeks to investigate a defined phenomenon through the provision of hypotheses to recognize reasons and effects.

➢ Descriptive: usually portrays a situation or a phenomenon.

➢ Explanatory: employs a particular theory as a basis to test a specific phenomenon

Ultimately, the investigator has used an exploratory case study type for the purpose of exploring the role of journals to promote EFL teachers professional development in NUC.

2.3. Research Approach

Research is an art of scientific investigation to discover answers to questions based on two basic approaches known respectively as quantitative approach and qualitative approach.

The present case study has been undertaken for the sake of exploring EFL teachers' use of reflective journaling for the sake of professional development via a mixed methods approach. The latter involves the joint use of both quantitative and qualitative approaches with the endeavour of offering the best of both, where the former is based on the measurement of quantity or amount to obtain numerical data, the latter is concerned with qualitative phenomenon and it is based on careful and detailed descriptive facts.

Despite the fact that the two previous patterns represent two distinct approaches to research, yet they are not essentially judged as discrete, accordingly

Dörnyei says **"I agree that qualitative and quantitative methods are not extremes but rather form a continuum"** (2007: 25).

The assortment of both qualitative and quantitative approaches principles has founded the building blocks of a new emerging research approach known as 'mixed methods research', which has proved to be useful for case study research.

As a method, mixed method approach focuses on collecting, analyzing, and mixing both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study or series of studies, **"some sort of combination of qualitative and quantitative methods within a single research project"** (Dornyei,2007:42). Its central premise is that the use of quantitative and qualitative approaches, in combination, provides a better understanding of research problems than either approach alone, moreover the mixed method approach is best used to increase the strengths while eliminating the weaknesses that is to say one method can be used to overcome the weaknesses of the other method.

2.4. Sample Population

According to Given (2008), a sample is a set of actual data sources that are drawn from a larger population of potential data sources. Within the broad process of sampling, choosing the actual sample is the second step in a two-step process, which begins with defining the population that is eligible for inclusion in the sample, in the same vein "**The process of selecting a portion of the population to represent the entire population is known as sampling"** (Wood & Haber 1998:250; Polit & Hungler 1999:95)

As a case study, this research work attempts to assess the effects of reflective journaling on teacher's professional development, therefore, the researcher has opted for a sample randomly obtained from the total teachers who teach the English language. The selected sample is a group of university EFL teachers which were selected randomly. The investigator has opted for constructing her study to get real varied data about the use of reflective journals in their teaching experience to reach proficiency. The interviewed teachers from NUC are eleven (11) female teachers of

English. Their teaching experience in university varies from four (4) to fourteen (14) years, and their ages vary from twenty five (25) to forty two (42) years old.

2.5. Research Instruments

Data collection is an essential component to conducting research that is based on the use of various research instruments including open-ended ,close-ended questionnaires, observations and interviews which can be used either individually or grouped depending on the research goals and the advantages and disadvantages of each method for the sake of boosting the research validity and dependability (O'Leary,2004) .

In fact, relying on more than one research instrument gives the researcher a perfect opportunity to triangulate the results and guarantee their validity and vigour, similarly. Triangulation was defined by Lisa. M Given (2008:893) as,

> **Triangulation in qualitative research has come to mean a multi-method approach to data collection and data analysis. The basic idea underpinning the concept of triangulation is that the phenomena under study can be understood best when approached with a variety or a combination of research methods.**

Consequently, the present work aims at collecting data about the use of reflective journals to promote teachers professional development through the joint use of both 'teachers interview' and 'the analysis of their journals'.

2.5.1. Interview

Interviews are a popular and wildly used means for collecting qualitative data. This research instrument involves the use of a set of oral verbal questions prepared by the interviewer to his /her interviewees or respondents and recording their answers. According to Burns (1997: 329), **"an interview is a verbal interchange, often face to face, though the telephone may be used, in which an interviewer tries to elicit information, beliefs or opinions from another person"**.

Any person-to-person interaction, either face to face or otherwise, between two or more individuals with a specific purpose in mind is called an interview.

Actually, interviews has known different forms such as focus group interviews, telephone interviews, e-mail interviews, and one to one interview that the researcher has adopted for this inquiry.

The researcher has designed an interview as one data collection which was conducted face to face with the majority of EFL teachers. The interview has been opened with an informed consent in which the researcher has advocated her real objective behind it. Then, it was followed by a set of questions (see Appendix) which varied between closed-ended and open-ended questions, starting from easy personal questions asked for the sake of gaining factual information and serving a relaxed atmosphere for the interviewee encouraging her/him to open up.

The subsequent questions were content questions in which the researcher sought to get the teacher's viewpoints, performance, evaluations and experiences. Nevertheless, the last closing question has been carefully designed to permit the interviewee to have the final say concerning the use of reflective journals by those teachers to promote professional development. It is necessary also to mention that the interview has been done via email with three (03) teachers were the researcher has left enough gaps for the interviewees to respond to the questions, and a telephone-email with only one (01) teacher.

2.5.2 Journal

As mentioned in the previous chapter, journals supplements detailed descriptions including thought processes, problems encountered by teachers, their critical thinking in addition to other different incidents that may occur inside the classroom. Journals have been wildly used in several areas of professional development, including higher education, nursing, allied health, medicine and dentistry, and adult education. As already noted, it is commonly accepted that reflective practice is critical to professional development. Yet, the maintenance of

reflective journals does not inevitably guarantee that teachers reflect; rather, several may merely describe their experiences and not take the crucial step toward analysis as anticipated by Atkins and Murphy (2011).

Analyzing journals is also another tool for gaining introspected qualitative data which provides valuable insights about classroom events and interactions, according to Given(2008:476) "**As narrative methods gain popularity in the social sciences and other disciplines, so does the use of diaries and journals as valuable qualitative tools**".

Therefore, an instrument will be designed to assess individual elements of reflection and to judge the overall level of reflection within each journal of teachers. Codes and operational definitions will be developed from the theories of Boud et al., Mezirow, and Schön. The analysis will be at the level of the words, sentences, and paragraphs within the journals relying on the following elements of reflection: reflection in action, reflection on action, reflection for action, and the results will be reported qualitatively into texts and passages.

2.6. Data Analysis

It is commonly agreed that using more than one type of analysis may afford results that are more reliable. Thus, the results obtained are analysed through the joined use of both qualitative and quantitative methods in this investigation.

2.6.1. Teachers'Interview Analysis

For the sake of gathering in-depth information about the use of reflective journals for professional development, the researcher has selected a sample of eleven (11) EFL teachers from NUC who belong to various specialities during the academic year 2018/2019.As mentioned before, the interview that the researcher had with the teachers was structured in its nature, in other words the investigator has relied on a set of pre-prepared outline.

➢ **Item one :** Teaching experience

Experience	Number of teachers	Percentages
4-7 years	04	36%
8 -10 years	06	55%
More than 10 years	01	9%
Total	11	100%

Table 2.1: Teaching Experience

EFL teachers' teaching experiences have varied from four (04) years to fourteen (14) years as the above percentages shows. The higher scores go for teachers who have between eight (08) to ten (10) years which makes the collected date reliable due to the fact that the sample population have an acceptable experience.

➢ **Item two:** Do you use any kind of reflective tools?
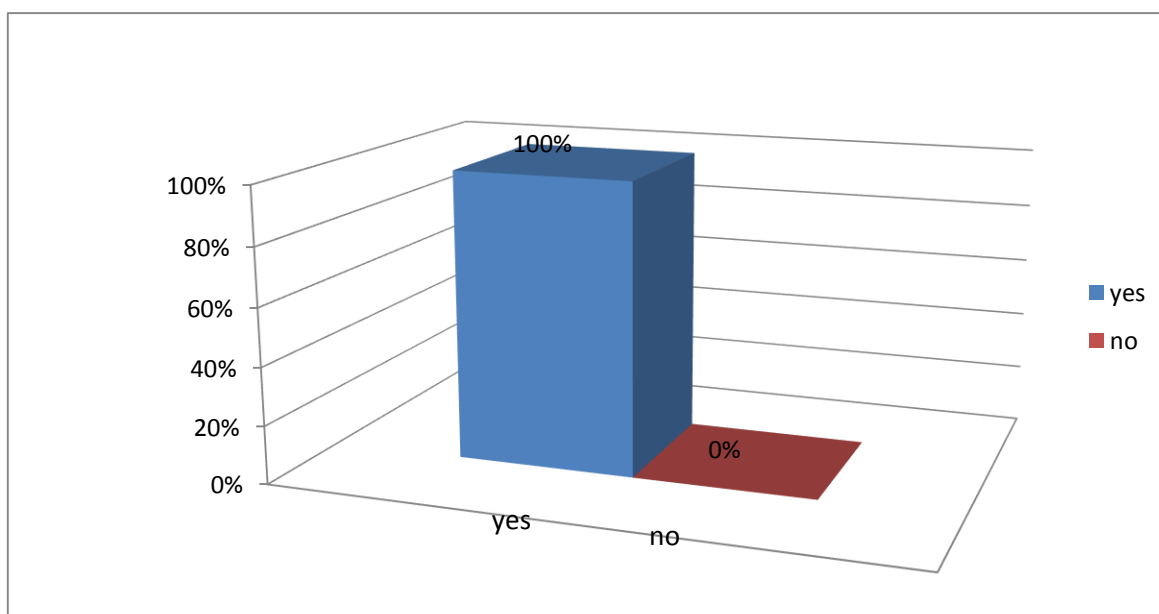
Bar-Graph 2.1: Teacher's use of Reflective Tools

The graphs above indicate that all NUC teachers (100%) are using reflective tools. As a result, it can be deduced that EFL teachers are highly reflective and interested as well about their teaching performance.

➢ **Item three:** Do you use journaling to rethink on your performance?
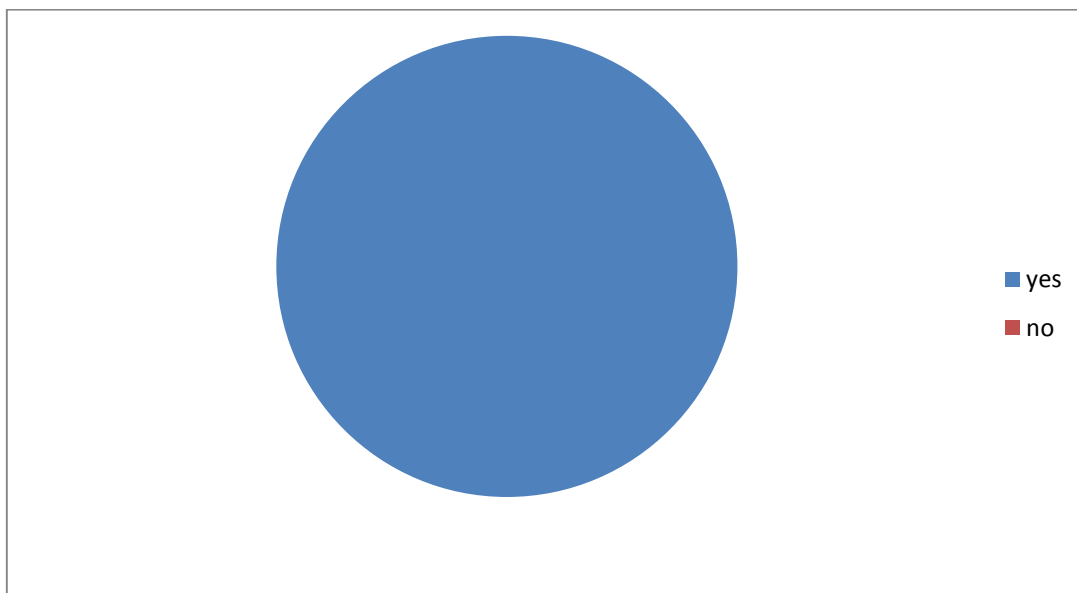
Pie-Chart 2.1: Teachers' Reflection upon their Performance

The pie –chart above reveals out that all NUC EFL teachers are using written reflective journals with 100% of agreement. Hence, this score reflects the teachers' awareness towards the progress of both teaching, and learning processes through documenting the events and the circumstances that they face in their teaching environment .One of the teachers has clarified that she prefers to use her journals in order to prepare the objectives of each session so that she checks later if she did reach them or not.

> **Item four:** For how long do you use journal writing?

Period of use	Number of teachers	Percentages
2-7 years	07	64%
8- 10 years	03	27%
More than 10 years	01	9%
Total	11	100%

Table2.2: Teachers' Use of Journal Writing

The table above demonstrates that the majority of EFL teachers use journals for a long period of time with the percentage of 64%. One of the teachers has clarified that she uses reflective journals after a course and in another time after a whole semester. Consequently, this shows that the sample selected is adapted and experienced in reflecting upon their teaching performance from the beginning of their careers. Furthermore, most of NUC EFL teachers have added that journals have become a crucial part of their teaching process which cannot be demised.

> **Item five:** How often do you use journaling?
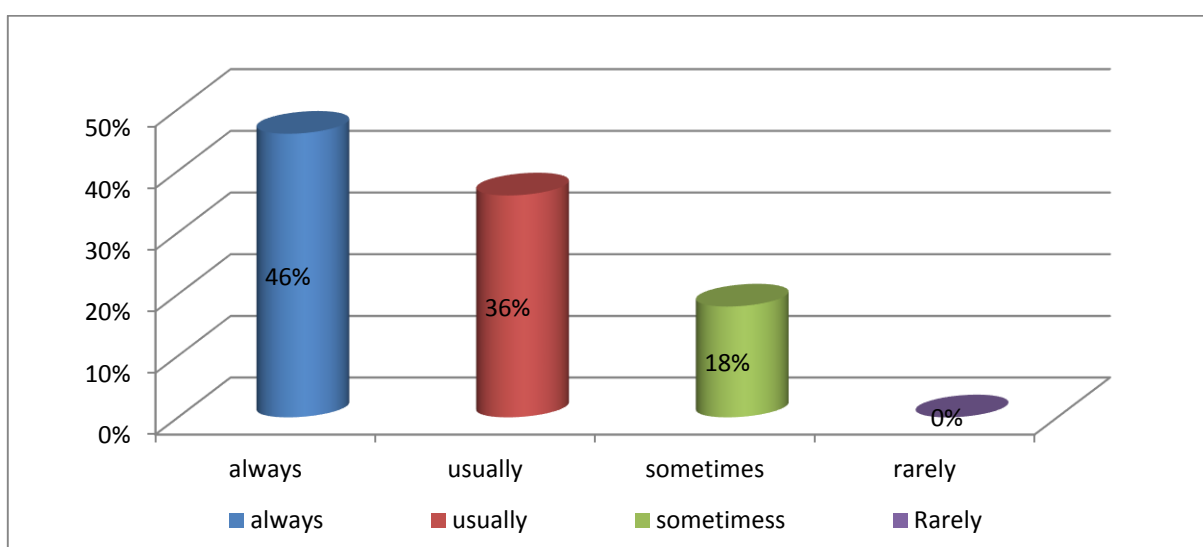
Bar-Graph2.2: Teacher's Frequent Usage of Journals

From the graphs above, it is fairly clear that all EFL teachers are using reflective journals frequently since the majority has stated that they are keen to document their ideas and notes regularly and in an organized manner.

> ➢ **Item six:** do you record your ideas before during or after your lectures?

Concerning this question, the majority of the respondents (60%) have claimed that they record their ideas after the lectures only. The teachers also stated that they use those journals to mention their remarks about some issues that they had with their learners such as students' lack of motivation, anxiety, positivity and lack of interest, thus they try to reflect upon other types of lessons and courses that may increase their interest and then boost their motivation.

Another teacher who is using journals after the sessions only has claimed that she is using such reflection to develop an action plan as a new method or technique addressing the problems that she faces like learners autonomy, she add: "learners are always relying merely on what I give them without any personal effort".

A small number of teachers (18%) have declared that they record their ideas both before, and after the lectures, whereas some of them have explained that they reflect before the session to modify, change or add extra headings or examples to their lecture plan. Others prefer to write some notes to be remembered when explaining the course. The same teachers have said that they use journals after their sessions as well to check if they did reached the course objectives, or to mention some remarks about few points that did not worked well with the other groups or subgroups.

Two (02) other teachers have admitted that they make use of their reflective journals before/during and after the sessions. Before the sessions; to critically analyse the coming lecture and append the needed changes or modifications. During the sessions to highlight the difficult points for the students in order to be changed or modified in the future. After the session to check out if everything worked well or to write about some issues that hindered the teaching/learning process as other teachers have already mentioned.

The last teacher however, has claimed that she uses her reflective journals before and sometimes during lectures for the same reasons as the previous teachers.

➢ **Item seven**: Do you think that journal writing impacts your teaching performance?

This question answers has revealed a complete agreement from all the respondents about the impact of journal writing on the teaching performance with the percentage of (100%).

➢ **Item eight:** In which way may journal writing influence your teaching performance?

Regarding the influence of journals writing on teaching performance, most teachers agreed on the fact that reflective journals have a vital role in enhancing their levels through modifying or changing their teaching strategies and methods.

Nevertheless, the explanations were different. The first teacher has explained the previous, shedding light on the ability to avoid the previous same issues in the future sessions, in addition to making some point clearer in comparison to what it used to be. Another teacher has elucidated the previous emphasizing the journals role in helping her to explain the courses in a better way taking into consideration, the learner's levels, needs and interests.

The last teacher has clarified her answer according to three dissimilar levels. The first was the difficulties faced during lessons where she clarified that through reflective journals she could change ambiguous examples, and explain difficult terms .The second level was to change or modify her methods such as using the data show, presentations, handouts and white boards. The last level she has mentioned was modifying the order of the lessons throughout the curriculum according to the students needs analysis.

Other teachers (45%) have seen that reflective journals are effective in the way it allows them to ameliorate their teaching through recognizing their strengths and dealing with their weaknesses i.e., through self-evaluation. One of the teachers has

stated that reflective journals have the power to facilitate students' engagement and active learning through keeping the learners up with the lectures. She added, as a teacher "it also helps me to know my subject area very well, which give me the opportunity to plan for the next sessions, in addition to being myself when I stand in the classroom"

➢ **Item nine:** Do you have other purposes from writing journals?

The answers of this question were varied. In order to report them the researcher tried to look for the common point between them. Most of the teachers' answers turned around the idea that reflective journals are fundamental for developing both teaching and learning processes by staying up to date and for uncovering students' needs and learning styles. One of the teachers considers reflective journals as a diary. In the same vein, another has professed that she uses reflective journals to record the best moments with her students during the sessions. At the end one of the teachers said that she uses journals to give help to those novice teachers in order to take experience from that remarks and notes.

➢ **Item ten**: according to you how may reflective journals enhance EFL teacher's professional development?

For this question most answers have been revolving around the same notion; which reveals that maintaining reflective journals have become a pivotal reference that EFL teachers rely on in order to, improve both the teaching and learning processes. In other words, teachers will gain a fruitful experience from the recorded information, remarks and notes, which give them the chance to demystify all the ambiguous events that may face them. Moreover, reflective journals will enable EFL teachers to cope with more complex situations and circumstances and avoid the same previous problems, and finally have an exhaustive knowledge about their professional growth and knowledge.

2.6.2. Journal Analysis

In the present study, journal analysis was selected in order to uncover the rationale behind teacher's use of journals; along with the dominant type of reflection that is most dominant between teachers.

Moreover, the researcher wanted to highlight the critical problems that EFL teachers face with their learners that make them reflect upon their performance. In other words, the journal analysis is used to conform the results obtained from the interview analysing some of the journals, the researcher has figured out that most teachers' journals were mainly about the problems that they face during their lectures including the ''. Thus, they always reflect for other types of lessons and courses that may increase their learner's interest, make them active and thus, develop their motivation. Furthermore, other teachers have relied on those journals in order to ameliorate, change, or modify their teaching methods, strategies, and performance in the classroom after continuously reading and interpreting their notes.

In addition, other teachers have used journals to take down some notes concerning new future lectures so that they arrange and remember some crucial points in the lecture as well.

Additionally, the investigator has unveiled the fact that most EFL teachers 'reflect on action', that is to say they record their journals after the sessions by writing down what hindered the success of the course, including what were the main issues that they have faced with the methodology followed, problems encountered with their learners or even the materials used.

Nevertheless, some teachers reflect 'in action, 'where they prefer to maintain their journals during the lectures to mention some notes about some headlines or ideas to be changed or modified. Some teachers also take notes about some student's misbehaviours or about the problems that they are facing while presenting the course.

2.7. Data Interpretation

The data gathered has revealed that the use of reflective journals has become a crucial part of the teaching process for a large amount of teachers. The investigator has figured out that EFL teachers do reflect on their teaching performance using journal writing from the beginning of their teaching vocation. Moreover, this study has proved that most EFL teachers prefer reflection on action, that is to say they prefer to take their time reflecting on their teaching after the sessions.

Furthermore, the researcher conformed that all NUC EFL teachers are adapted to use reflective journals in a frequent organized way in order to reflect upon their teaching performance through recording their daily or weekly experiences in terms of notes or passages. From reading their journals, it was obvious that someof EFL teachers are mainly interested to record the problems that they encounter during the sessions especially lack of: motivation interest and autonomy. In addition other teachers have relied on reflective journals to write about the difficulties they face when presenting their lectures so that it will be changed or modified, others employ them as a basis for the sake of self-evaluation to develop both teaching and learning processes through critically analysing the recorded data depending on their learner's needs.

To put it concisely, and after analysing both research instruments, it appears that reflective journals have a great impact on EFL teacher's professional development.

2.8. Suggestions and Recommendations

After analysing both teachers' journals and interviews, it appeared that teachers are already familiar with reflective journals use. Nevertheless, they sometimes face some challenges in analysing those journals especially when it comes to some critical incidents. Thus, the following recommendations can be presented to minimize those challenges.

As presented before, reflection is believed to be a genuine way of fostering changes in teachers' professional actions. That kind of reflection generally takes place due to any critical incident that can be both positive and negative classroom event, and which must be a topic of analysis.

According to Dewey, unexamined experiences lose their potential for growth and teacher development (Dewey, 1933; Rodgers, 2002).In this part the investigator will provide a set of procedures and tips for critical incidents analysis which involves the documentation and analysis of teaching incidents, in order to learn from them and improve the teaching practice.

1/Anatomy of a critical incident

Critical incidents can uncover some of the underlying principles, beliefs, and assumptions that shape classroom practices. Tripp (1993), claimed that it is a learning process in which the teacher is the learner and the one who teaches".

According to Thomas S. C. Farrell (2005), there are two stages to understanding a critical incident: The first stage is to describe the incident step by step insisting on every single detail that can be important, and the second is to explain its meaning, in other words to give the rationale behind such incident (the "what" and the "why").

2/Preparing and analysing critical incident reports

Thiel (1999), proposes that the reporting of any critical incidents (written or spoken) should follow specific steps known as self-observation, describing what happened, self-awareness, and self-evaluation.

- ✓ *Self-observation*: is the first step in the analysis of a critical incident that can be done by identifying the major events that arise in the classroom through observing one's own teaching.
- ✓ *Describing what happened*: is the second step in reporting critical incidents that entails writing a detailed description of what happened.
- ✓ *Self-awareness*: is the last step in reporting a critical incident that is best done by analysing the real reasons behind such incident. It may be necessary to look at the whole picture of the classroom lesson, the lesson objectives,

the students, the disposition of the students, the time of day, the mode of delivery of the lesson, and so on, as there are rarely easy, single cause-and-effect explanations as to why a critical incident occurred during a lesson.

When reflecting on a critical incident, the teacher can ask a set of questions to facilitate the task. Those questions include the following:

- Why was this incident significant?
- What happened directly before the event?
- What happened directly after the event?
- How did I react at the time of the event?
- What is my interpretation of this event?
- What underlying assumptions about my teaching does this critical incident raise?
- Now that I have reflected on this critical incident, would I react any differently if it happened again? Why or why not?

The emphasis here is reflecting on the incident in terms of its personal meaning. This may mean examining one's beliefs and understandings, and how can these make the incident critical.

One of the drawbacks of analysing critical incidents is finding time to document an incident after the class. One way to counteract this is to immediately use a recorder after the incident or the class, and write it out when time allows. In this way, the teacher will ensure that none of the details will be forgotten, because of time or fatigue constraints.

2.9. Limitations of Research

When conducting the present rinvestigation, the investigator has faced some complications, which are considered as limitations of research. First of all, the popular and the political movements in Algeria have hinder the researcher from interviewing all EFL NUC teachers as they did not teach the whole semester, due to the fact that the university students went in a strike and have closed the university for a long period of time. Moreover, the students' strike was another reason that

prevented the researcher from attaining all the teachers' journals as they did not write their reflective ideas.

It is worthy also to mention that researcher did not provided any journals in the appendixes section in order to preserve the teachers' privacy as they asked for that.

2.10. Conclusion

This chapter is considered as the heart of this research work because its primary concern was to present, analyse and discuss the main findings drawn from the selected data collection instruments, i.e., the teacher's interview and the teacher's journals analysis.

The data gathered were analysed both qualitatively and quantitatively and based on the entire findings, the research hypotheses have been tested and conformed. After the analysis, the investigator has interpreted the results providing an exhaustive explanation about the effect of reflective journals on teachers' professional development. Consequently, the final part was an assortment of suggestions and recommendations that were addressed to all EFL teachers.

General Conclusion

GENERAL CONCLUSION

This research paper has given a considerable amount of emphasis to the effects of reflective teaching on teacher's professional development through the use of reflective journals. This study in fact showed that journal writing has an enormous impact on teachers' critical reflection over their own performance.

As explained through the chapters of this work, more details, definitions procedures, and structures about reflective journals have been overviewed in the first chapter i.e., literature review ,in addition to other key concepts in this work. Through the first chapter, the researcher sought to uncover the myriad benefits of reflective journals over teacher's performance, and then over their completely professional development. The second chapter on the other hand, was the practical side where the researcher has conducted an interview with eleven (11) NUC EFL teachers only due to the circumstances that the university passed through. In addition, analysing some of their journals, in order to touch clearly how reflective journals may influence EFL mentors teaching performance.

For the sake of understanding the impact of reflective journals, a case study has been designed to answer the research questions and to test the research hypotheses. Furthermore, the researcher opted for a mixed method approach through a combination of both quantitative and qualitative methods for data collection and analysis in the second chapter. The results obtained from the interview conducted with EFL teachers together with the analysis of their journals have revealed the awareness of EFL teachers about the efficacy of journal writing for their reflection on action. Additionally, the investigator has discovered the profound impact of reflective journals on EFL teacher's performance including their teaching methods, level and strategies.

Accordingly, the present study has been conducted for the endeavour to investigate the impact of reflective journals on teacher's professional development and, thus, encouraging teachers to rely on journal writing in order to reflect upon their teaching performance for the success and the progress of both teaching and learning

processes. The final findings together with the suggested recommendations are maintained to afford valuable insights to EFL teachers to incorporate reflective journals for the sake of their own professional development.

After analysing the results of the interview, the investigator ends up by discovering that the first hypothesis mentioned in the beginning of this work is true due to the respondent's declarations, which were with the same view. Similarly, the researcher was able to confirm the second hypothesis which indicates that "Teachers use of journals will allow them to step back and continuously evaluate, examine and think purposefully and systematically about their practice so that they understand then, develop and improve their teaching performance" as the informants have strongly agreed with.

In fact, it is hard to yield a comprehensive work that sheds lights on every single detail about the corporation of reflective journals for EFL teachers. Hence, the ending of this research work can be a humble starting point for other research in the field; as, it gives the opportunity for conducting other investigations and consider other angles and variables.

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Appendices

Teacher's Interview

Dear teacher,

This interview seeks to collect information about the role of reflective journals to promote teacher's professional development. Hence you are kindly asked to respond to the following questions.

1) For how long have you been teaching English?
2) Do you use any kind of written tools to reflect on your teaching practice?
3) Do you use journaling to rethink on your performance?
4) For how long do you use journal writing?
5) How often do you use journaling?
6) Do you record your ideas before/during or after lectures?
7) Do you think that journal writing influences your teaching performance?
8) In which way may journal writing influence your teaching performance?
9) Do you have other purposes from writing journals?
10) According to you, how may reflective journals enhance EFL teacher's professional development?

Thank you for your collaboration