

Student Teachers' Perception of Reflective Journal Writing in Placement Practicum: Experience from a Hong Kong Institution

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Abstract

The paper aims to research kindergarten student teachers' perceptions of reflective journal writing and its role in fieldwork placement within the context of Hong Kong. To respond to their professional growth, student teachers use reflective journal writing as an essential assignment in early childhood education because it gives them the opportunity to explore the understanding they have gained in a specific context of fieldwork placement practices. Nevertheless, the quality of reflection is heavily dependent on their perception of the practices and the learning context, because they can choose to remain at the surface level and avoid the reflection process. In this regard, instead of merely implementing reflective journal writing, it is urgent that teacher educators learn more about student teachers' understanding of their role. Thus, first, this paper briefly illustrates the role of reflective practices in developing kindergarten student teachers' professional growth. It then reviews the relevant literature on reflective journal writing and argues the importance of individual practitioners' perspectives of reflective practices. By drawing empirical data from five kindergarten student teachers currently studying in an institution in Hong Kong, this qualitative study assesses their perception of reflective journal writing in placement learning through photo-elicitation interviews.

Key words: Reflection, reflective journal writing, early childhood education, fieldwork placement

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Introduction

Reflective practices have been widely applied in many disciplines (Cannady & Gallo, 2016; Epp, 2008; Power, 2017; Sage & Sele, 2015; Murdoch-Eaton & Sandars, 2014; Woronchak & Comeau, 2016), as well as in teacher education and training over the last decade (Acquah & Commins, 2015; Bleach, 2014; Castellan, 2012; Chien, 2014; Farrell & Mom, 2015; Nicholson & Kroll, 2015; Parkison, 2009; Riojas-Cortez et al., 2013; Zulfikar & Mujiburrahman, 2018). Kindergarten teacher preparation programs are no exception (Barry & Durham, 2017; Beck, 2013; Caudle & Moran, 2012; Recchia & Beck, 2014; Ritblatt et al., 2013; Santo et al., 2017). Particularly, these practices have been relevant in fieldwork placement learning, which aims to offer students valuable field experience learning to become qualified teachers by moving from classroom observers to actors engaged in dynamic teaching (Ohi, 2014; Recchia et al., 2009; Wee et al., 2014; Thorpe et al., 2012; White et al., 2016). Further, student teachers are required to maintain a reflective journal of their experiences during student-teaching and share their feelings regarding all aspects of the classroom, relationships with particular students, personal views, insights, and so on (Machado & Meyer-Hotnarescue, 2001). At the start of their learning, kindergarten student teachers might narrowly focus on measurable tasks or be highly dependent on exercises to tell them what to look for rather than experiencing the process that leads to meaningfully completing and applying knowledge. Over time, reflection is supposed to provide depth and gradually include more comparative and critical aspects in practical theories (Beavers et al., 2017; Körkkö et al., 2016). This reflection process is significant and irreplaceable, because the substantive and overarching value of reflection helps student teachers discover and integrate inconsistencies between their beliefs and practices in a situational and authentic in-field learning experience. Thus, this reflection process helps student teachers integrate their field experiences with their coursework, which serves as a touchstone for their decisions in teaching practices and in growing professionally (Caudle & Moran, 2012; McFarland et al., 2009; Nickel et al., 2010; Recchia & Beck, 2014; Ritblatt et al., 2013).

Within the scope of research studies on this topic, a remarkably high percentage of studies, published over previous decades, were conducted in the western context. Studies

assessing reflective practices by student teachers are also ample, but the focus has mainly been their pedagogical use, with little attention to the field of early childhood education. However, teacher educators have well-established pedagogical frameworks of reflective practices that student teachers may be incapable of gaining if they remain at the surface level, fail to make any effort to understand the reflection process, or suffer in the discourse that materializes in classroom observations and daily pedagogical practices, resulting in the reproduction of educational inequities (Kim & Kim, 2017). To facilitate these discussions, particularly regarding contextual factors as an important account of reflective practices, this paper explores kindergarten student teachers' perceptions of reflective practices and examines how they contribute to their fieldwork placement learning at Institution A in Hong Kong, one of Hong Kong's authorized tertiary institutions offering kindergarten teacher training. All the participants in this study were pre-service kindergarten teachers who had enrolled in a higher diploma program of early childhood education in 2017/18 and had completed their first professional placement. Before outlining the research procedures and analyzing the narratives of cases, this paper provides a background of reflective journal writing with respect to student teachers' professional growth, and it demonstrates the importance of individual practitioners' perceptions of the quality of reflective practice outcomes.

Reflective Journal Writing as a Means of Reflection

Reflective journal writing refers to the "written material that is based on reflection and is relatively free writing, though it may be written within a given structure" (Moon, 2010, p. 187). Except for the initial recording experience, it aims to improve students' practice by taking different actions in the real world after their reflections (pp. 190-191). Boud et al. (1985, pp. 63-65) highlighted that there are three aspects of contributions that reflective writing brings to students. First, journal writing is a way of distancing students from experience and removing personal feelings that block their attention on the experience of what actually happened and is learned. Second, journal writing can elevate students' appreciation toward the learning process and help students recognize deeper feelings and

reasons why particular affective responses occurred during the initial learning experience. Last, journal writing can assist students in integrating new and old ideas in certain ways that become the basis of work and growth. Further, journals serve as a unique platform for student teachers to interact with instructors on a personal and regular basis (Abednia, et al., 2013; Everett, 2013). Similarly, reflective journal writing is particularly crucial in facilitating student teachers' professional growth, because by writing down their experiences regularly over a period of learning, student teachers can learn from the process of representing and reviewing in order to narrate and reflect on themselves and their teaching. This promotes awareness of classroom practices, perceptions about teacher–student interaction, and methods in preparing teaching material (Good & Whang, 2002; Myers et al., 2017; Zulfikar & Mujiburrahman, 2018).

In fact, theoretically, reflective practice has long been discussed in teachers' professional growth. Dewey (1910) proposed that reflection is “the act of searching for the way out of perplexity and hesitation that is directed towards bringing further facts to light,” so having teachers reflectively review and summarize ideas and activities can help them derive meaning and intelligence when encountering future experiences (Dewey, 1963). This idea was then explored in the 1980s by Donald Schön, who believed that teachers should be reflective practitioners who know how to cope with situations of uncertainty instead of the routine functions of the profession. However, Schön (1987) specifically emphasized the concept of “reflection-in-action,” in which the reflection process is not concerned with instrumental and technical problems but goes beyond rules and functions on the artistry of individuals' own professional practices, both daily and in future actions. According to both Schön and Dewey, the reflection process implies that something is believed or disbelieved depending on the individual practitioners' own unique experiences. In other words, it assumes that the individuals who can make new sense of conflicted situations of practice and affirm new actions to change things for the better are autonomous. Without a doubt, no individual practitioners can project the consequences of observed conditions and make judgments except by reflecting on past experiences and finding similarities to the present situation. However, individual practitioners' perspectives also influence their approach to situations and how they choose to process the experience, because they can choose the manner of reflection and direct the reflective practice to a variety of ends (Boud et al., 1985,

p. 24).

As a means of reflection, Hatton and Smith (1995) agree that individuals' reflective journal writing might focus on measurable tasks rather than the process that led to meaningful completion and knowledge application. They further identified four types of journal writing, three of which are characterized by different types of reflections. According to Hatton and Smith, descriptive writing is not reflective at all but reports on events or literature at a surface level. Beyond descriptive writing, the other types of journal writing are descriptive reflection, dialogic reflection, and critical reflection. At the level of descriptive reflection, individual practitioners might attempt to reason issues based on their personal judgment or reading of the literature. Dialogic reflection is a type of discourse that explores possible reasons. The last type, critical reflection, focuses on reasons for decisions, which takes into account broader situational contexts. This last form of journal writing is similar to Manen's (1977) discussion and definition of "critical reflection," which is the highest level of rational consideration and refers to the analysis and inspection of a foundational value system and concepts instead of focusing on achieving predetermined objectives and the significance and assumptions of actions. If individual practitioners can be engaged in critical reflection through journal writing, they will transcend inner professional growth (Zhao, 2012).

Reflective journal writing can be seen as an active struggle for individual practitioners' understanding and recognition of the lived meanings of their learning situations. However, in the meantime, this struggle also implies that the quality of reflection depends on the individual practitioners' attention to the perception of writing and subtle significations in their lived experiences (Manen, 2006). In other words, as the abovementioned literature stated that it is not possible to desire the individual practitioners' promise to write something for the sake of their professional growth, paradoxically, referring to early childhood education, kindergarten student teachers could simply complete the journal in an economic and efficient way to meet the subject requirements and be incapable of deep analytical reflection. Therefore, in addition to the pedagogical use of reflective practices, it is urgent to start the discussion of their perceptions and understanding of reflective practices in particular learning and institutional contexts. In this direction, the research question that this study aims to explore is "How do kindergarten student teachers perceive

reflective journal writing in their placement learning?”

Method

Research Design

Any learning process is subject to learners’ perspectives, their understanding of the practices, and the teaching and learning context (Prosser & Trigwell, 1999). Kindergarten teachers’ professional learning is no exception. In fact, it is evidenced that their learning outcome is subject to variations, such as a collaborative staff environment (Lehrer, 2013), education level (Goble et al., 2015), kindergarten’s cultural background (Pihlaja & Holst, 2013), classroom-based experiences (Maynard et al., 2014), pedagogical context (Isik-Ercan & Perkins, 2017), his or her approach to reflection (Otienoh, 2011), mentorship style (Loizou, 2011), and so on. In such a way, any discussion about teaching and learning in higher education should not overlook the interactive experience between the learners and their unique learning situation. As this study regards contextual factors as an important account in researching the kindergarten student teachers’ experience and perception of reflective journal writing, a qualitative case study will be adopted, because it can guide us to “catch the close up reality and thick description of participants’ lived experiences” (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 254) and to understand student teachers “in depth, and its natural setting, recognizing its complexity and its context” (Punch, 2014, p. 144).

Setting and Participants

Institution A is one of Hong Kong’s authorized tertiary sectors offering an Education Bureau (EDB)-recognized early childhood education program. Its graduates can register as Qualified Kindergarten Teachers with the equivalence of a Certificate in Early Childhood Education, which is a requirement under the Education Ordinance, and as Child Care Workers and Child Care Supervisors under the Child Care Services Regulations in Hong Kong. The two-year full-time higher diploma in early childhood education is government-

funded and is mainly designed for secondary school teachers whose previous experience with children under five years was limited. With the department's 35-year history, it is the largest and oldest institute offering a kindergarten teacher training program in Hong Kong, with over 1200 graduates in the past 3 years. To research the kindergarten student teachers' experiences in depth and illustrate the typical cases to those readers who are unfamiliar with the setting and context (Creswell, 2008, p.216; Cohen et al., 2007, p.236), five students in their first year of study and having completed their professional placement were purposively invited to participate in the project.

The research has been ethically approved and carried out at Institution A with five volunteer pre-service kindergarten teachers who enrolled in 2017/2018. All of the interviewees were in their first year of a higher diploma study of early childhood education and had completed their first professional placement. Referring to its curriculum, students must complete two compulsory in-service placements, the fieldwork placement and advanced placement, which comprise approximately 600 hours of professional training throughout the program. The first fieldwork placement starts in the second semester of the first year of study. It serves as a pre-requisite module of the advanced placement. To facilitate students' learning, students were asked to prepare one reflective journal after each lesson taught during the four weeks of placement learning. The journal is structurally formatted (Appendix One), constituting two parts: 1) an evaluation of the lesson design and implementation and 2) a reflection and suggested areas of improvement. Students must submit their reflective journal writings during their supervision, after which the supervisors respond to their journals weekly, with feedback that encourages students to improve their teaching ability and lesson design when they hand in the reflective journals the following week.

Data Collecting Procedure

Individual interviews were conducted in June 2018 to explore kindergarten student teachers' perceptions of reflective journal writing and its role in fieldwork placement in the context of Hong Kong. To avoid unwieldy and superficial perspectives in the results, five cases drew on a photo-elicitation interview, which induces photos in interviews to evoke

participants' responses and opens up a range of possibilities for the study (Thomas, 2011, p. 166). During the initial meeting, participants were asked to submit written consent and prepare images for the interview with the photos-elicitation instructions. Interviewees then had a week to select and provide four images to represent what was important to their growth in fieldwork placement and the positive or negative experiences of working in kindergarten. Once the pictures were ready, the researcher interviewed the participants as soon as was practicable. Before the interviews, the researcher informed the participants of the nature, aims, and procedures of the project again with the written consent form and detailed information sheet. Interview session only commenced once the consent form was signed and the participants fully understood the project's nature. Opening with the orientation questions related to the selected pictures at the beginning of the interview, in order to elicit more information, the researcher asked follow-up questions related to their sharing, in order to capture their perceptions and experiences on the complexities of reflective journal writing. The individual interviews were conducted conversationally and lasted for approximately one hour at the individual meeting room in the institution. All interviews were audio-recorded and conducted in Cantonese so the participants felt comfortable conversing and expressing their concerns in their first language. Interviews were then transcribed verbatim for further analysis.

Analyzing Data

For privacy, protection, and safeguarding issues, the children or individuals in the photos with the interviewees were protected using pseudonyms or general references, such as Child A/Individual A. In photography, it is usually impossible to maintain anonymity of people and places, so the images have not been used to disseminate the findings. By using qualitative analysis, data analysis was situated in an iterative, dynamic, and recursive process, in which the author moved among data, the theoretical framework, and the research question (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). In the pre-coding stage, all data were reviewed. The researcher then captured the specific word and phrase that was used in the participants' responses and documented the reflections. Guided by the coding steps and process introduced by Creswell (2008, p. 250-253), informational segments were labeled with 22

codes after a preliminary exploration of the data's general sense by reading scripts and creating labels for the codes that were consistent with the research question. After inductively coding the entire text and later deductively coding iteratively, similar codes were further aggregated to form themes to address the research question. Finally, two themes were formed in relation to the journal format and supervisors' support. To attain credible findings, each theme, along with its respective meaning, will be presented with evidence from the data to help the audience better understand the interviewees' perceptions and disposition of the reflective journals in the place of their first fieldwork learning.

Finding

Anecdotally, all the participants demonstrated part of their shared placement experiences in their journal writing. One reason is that they did not have the opportunity to record them in a journal format, while another is that they were not encouraged to engage in reflective processes within the program's curriculum.

Inappropriate Journal Format Undermine Personal Qualitative Writing

Journal writing has a significant influence on student teachers' reception and application of reflective practices (Khanjani et al., 2018), that is, any journals' instructions and format imply that there are imposed constraints on the ways in which a journal should be written. As a matter of fact, this constraint could be a greater benefit for the student teacher during their first placement, because it can ensure that student teachers reflect on the appropriate issues and their teaching practices in a professional manner:

I found the reflection of the learning objectives useful... I could review the lesson I processed and whether it met children's learning needs and matched their existing abilities. If the learning objectives could not be achieved, I had to redesign my lesson to facilitate children's learning through the lesson activities, but not merely for their fun and enjoyment... (Student B)

The session about learning objectives did help me grow. Sometimes, it may have been a bit difficult to deal with the children. But, at least, when you work with children, you need to know

that you are not just playing with them, but helping them learn and grow through activities. So, I need to know if the learning objectives were met and embedded in my every lesson. (Student C)

When working in a set journal format, student teachers start writing in one section and move to another section, guided by what they want to explore within the emerging themes. Paradoxically, the designed format limited the student teachers' reflection process:

...because the journal already had its structure and framework, you could not write what you liked, and it was not interested in your placement experience and fragment, so I could not write down my story there. (Student B)

Because the journal has its format, which means it is a checklist that you tick, and then refers to what you ticked to further analyze and think about improvement, there is no part that allows us to express our feelings and the sharing of our own affairs. (Student C)

The reflective journal is mainly designed for reviewing our lesson and its design. The experience I shared is not related to it but just some personal feelings and issues, so it would not be included in my writing. (Student D)

Student teachers' journal writing purposes were likely determined by the designed format and themes, such as the writing task with a checklist that focused on the relationship between the set learning objectives and teaching practices in each lesson. Lacking a section of free personal reflection and clear guidelines of the checklist, nevertheless, reduced student teachers' confidence and the other possibilities that enabled them to process their experiences, which was crucial for them in developing as kindergarten teachers:

I found the reflection of the learning objectives useful... I could review the lesson I processed and whether it met children's learning needs and matched their existing abilities. If the learning objectives could not be achieved, I had to redesign my lesson to facilitate children's learning through the lesson activities, but not merely for their fun and enjoyment... (Student B) I would only tick "partially achieved" and did not choose "completely achieved" every time. Writing something you did badly is safe. Even in the part on teaching material, I used to criticize myself and show how I can do better... (Student B)

The biggest problem of the journal is that you must follow the checklist. At the same time, I don't

know the criteria, as stated. For example, in the item “able to understand and properly execute safety procedure,” what is the difference between “completely achieved” and “partially achieved”? If I can’t figure the difference, how can I find the improvement? (Student C)

The problem is, in the checklist, you must choose some items that you did not achieve (even if you think you already achieved them) and write the improvements accordingly. As a result, in order to complete the reflective journal, sometimes I ticked the items I didn’t achieve in order to complete the task. (Student E)

When restricted by the journal’s format, personal qualitative writing loses the credibility of journal writing, which functions as “a resource for knowledge transfer, sharing of ideas, and keeping an eye on the dynamic and fluid process of evaluation” (Becker & Renger, 2016). Furthermore, because the student teachers’ sense of journal ownership dissolved, they processed the writing in a format-base and therefore, the journal only became a task or record and not a journal to reflect and form to learn.

Insufficient Support from the Supervisors on Their Reflective Writing

Thus, student teachers’ reflective writing has no end-point, as they can gain deeper reflections from events for as long as needed. However, in real situations, subject to the program’s curriculum, where the reflective practice was an assessment and only one part of the learning component in the fieldwork placement, student teachers might not be able to complete the reflective journal about when they suffered during the program’s curriculum:

Honestly, I suffered during the placement learning. You have to work in the kindergarten from Monday to Friday, and there are all sorts of tasks you must complete. I was stressed and often cried, because you have to submit all the assignments on time, and I always worked overnight.... (Student E)

Making teaching material seems easy, but takes a lot of time. During the placement, you have to work in the kindergarten, and then go back to the institution for supervision, writing the lesson plans, reflective journals, reports, and so on. You have to submit a total of four–five assignments every week during your placement. If you cannot sleep well, how can you take time for the

reflective journal writing? (Student A)

Student teachers' reflective process involves a "focus on uncertainty and perplexing events, and exploration without necessarily knowing where it will lead" (Boud, 2001). In this sense, the program curriculum should provide sufficient time and space, as well as adequate time and space for the supervisors' feedback. This is because it is necessary for them to offer regular timeouts and supportive responses that motivate and recognize their focus on the process of learning (Harris, 2008):

After the submission of the reflective journal, the supervisor has yet to review my writing, while the kindergarten has already asked me to modify my lesson plan. In this sense, how could I know that my reflective journal writing is proper? How can I know that my reflection is appropriate? Hence, I think the reflective journal is useless, for the purpose of assessment only, but not my real reflection at all. (Student B)

Furthermore, teacher educators should offer student teachers adequate guidelines about processing reflective practices and motivate them to write a more successful and reflective journal (Abednia et al., 2013). If not, the student teachers who regard the journal as a task would process their writing in a less honest manner, portraying themselves in the best light possible and anxiously worrying that they will be graded and assessed according to how their ideas fit the supervisor's expertise (Francis, 1995):

The reflective journal writing is for the scores only. The journal holds 15 marks (out of 100) in the fieldwork placement. So it is just a document as part of the assessment, and the supervisor does not review our journal seriously. Just like me, my supervisor has to oversee 16 students' placement, and all the students are required to hand in two reflective journals per week. If we write in detail, how can the supervisor go through all the journals? Honestly, it's just a task. The checklist has different items, so you should not tick the same item every time. If not, you have nothing to write about improvement or just repeat the writing in every journal... (Student C)

Kindergarten teacher education programs should "integrate comprehensive curriculum that nurtures a love for learning and self-discovery" (Beavers et al., 2017). However, in real situations, student teachers tend to provide superficial reflections with the aim of pleasing the supervisor, with the writing being more cautious and less genuine (Abednia et al., 2013). Further, the supervisor failed to facilitate the student teacher reflection with appropriate

feedback, and as a result, the student teachers dissociated the journal as a more formal learning material, an assignment for grading, or a curriculum requirement.

Discussion

In the present study, the participants believed that the reflection that occurred in the images encouraged them to establish meaningful connections between personal awareness and their fieldwork experiences. The extended interviewing process emphasized their reflections on the understanding of children, deepened emotions, and teaching material. Since the student teachers' reflective journal writing is subject to the journal's format and the program's curriculum, those valuable and different fieldwork experiences have not been projected in their writing. In fact, reflective journal writing can only be successful in improving students' learning performance if they are willing to construct meaning and are devoted to the learning process (Cisero, 2006). Therefore, first of all, we should be aware of the journal structure. Both structured and free formats have their benefits in reflective journal writing (Moon, 2010). It is noticeable that the structured journal helps students make sense of the experience and support their fieldwork practices. Nevertheless, especially in their first fieldwork placement, which is a new and challenging situation of learning and working in the education profession, the institution might review the journal and add some free-writing areas to allow students to act with all the qualities of personal issues or feelings, particularly as student E stated that her reflection has been "limited to the assigned items" and so she could not "write something important as she shared." To achieve this journal outcome, student teachers' qualitative experiences should be emphasized and the journal format should offer some freedom so they can express things not warranted by the pre-designed evaluation section (Sidhu et al., 2010), such as interactions with children and personal feelings.

The means of reflection is another issue the teacher educators need to consider. Any reflective practices should be a means for student teachers to express feelings, note new enthusiasms, sort out dilemmas and difficulties, or generate materials to be dealt with in a more structured manner. Of course, reflective journals provide one means for this. However,

some students-teachers might prefer other forms of reflection, such as videotaping or photographing (Zulfikar & Mujiburrahman, 2018). It is the same case we found in our project, for example, the students suggested the reflection “might be processed by video or images” because “sometimes they comprise more meanings than words do” (Student A and C). As some learners might not be as capable as others at self-expression in writing, there are different ways of reflection and of expressing that reflection. Therefore, the study suggests reviewing the program’s curriculum and providing alternative reflection activities that replace regular journal writing.

Additionally, assessing the quality of reflective journal writing could be difficult. Practically, supervisors have to take up the role of assessing the quality. However, setting assessment criteria and standards can be a challenge, and tension may unavoidably occur between assessments and reflection quality if the student teacher expresses their doubts, misunderstandings, mistakes, and what they don’t know subject to an unclear grading criteria. For example, the supervisor might only “pay attention to text and the word count is identical to the effort paid” (Student C). In this regard, to prevent the student teacher from providing superficial reflections, it is suggested to induce participation marks only for journal submissions (Boutet et al., 2017). If the journal must be graded, a supervisor needs to well-define the criteria and offer student teachers guidelines and good examples from previous students to give them an insight and to lay down the expectations of the assignment (Moon, 2006). Perhaps, in a wider scope, the institution needs to review the assessment mechanism and offer more relevant training to the supervisors.

Since journal writing should be made into a dialog between teacher educators and student teachers, teacher educators need to exercise care in the way they comment, which is based on a balance between critical and favorable feedback comments (Atiles & Pinholster, 2013). This is done so that student teachers recognize that certain experiences have potential for growth. In the meantime, considering the volume of journals that a supervisor assesses and whether the journal is handed in for comments on a regular basis by each student teacher, the institution should restrain the journal volume and extend the supervisors’ feedbacks into a capable workload. If such feedback is perceived as too time consuming, one option may be for teachers to ask students to choose the sections or entries they would most appreciate supervisor feedback on (Bruno, & Dell’Aversana, 2017).

Limitation

Limited to a small sample size with only five student teachers participating in the research, this paper was limited in providing ample information in the results. Nevertheless, this small-scale qualitative research has elicited a subjective response to the lived perception on reflective journal writing and to initiate further discussion in this area. Given the increased focus on the integration of theory and practice in early childhood education, it is important to understand student teachers' perceptions of reflective journal writing in their placement learning. Both reflective teaching practices and personal emotion should be reflected to enhance kindergarten student teachers' professional qualities and learning engagement in kindergarten. Guidelines and feedback are also encouraged to be provided by supervisors throughout reflective journal writing in assisting student teachers to reflect on their placement experience. The sample in the project was relied on a single institution in Hong Kong. A larger scale of study is suggested to be conducted to explore the capacity of student teachers' reflection in writing their journals during their placement. It is also suggested that any further study of reflective practices in kindergarten teacher education should take into account a wider context, with items concerning program curriculum design, as well as assessment and institutional context, with diverse participants' background.

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Appendix One: Institutional Reflective Journal (Translated to English)

Reflective Journal				
1. Name: 2. Activity Name / Type: 3. Activity Date / Time: 4. Age of Childhood / Class: 5. Learning Effectiveness				
Learning Objectives	Completely Achieved	Partially Achieved	Did not Achieve	Reflection on the learning effectiveness (Analyse children's achievements in respect to the learning objectives based on his/her performance or assignment)
1.				
2.				
3.				
6. Review the activity's design and the effectiveness of implementation				
6.1. Learning objectives			Completely Achieved	Partially Achieved
A. Learning objectives were met and embedded in the activity design				
B. Learning objectives were met and embedded in the content. Writing of the content is also clear and specific.				
C. Learning objectives are designed to meet the child's developmental needs and match his/her existing abilities				
The reason for "Partially Achieved / Did not Achieve" and advice for improvement :				
6.2. Content and Design			Completely Achieved	Partially Achieved
A. Seating arrangement is able to stimulate the children's learning.				
B. Adequate preparation before the activity				
C. Proper time management of the activity.				
D. Systemic organization of the teaching processes (motivation, activity sequencing, and conclusion).				
E. Adequate opportunities for children to work and participate during the activity.				
F. Activity was catered to the children's interests.				
The reason for "Partially Achieved / Did not Achieve" and advice for improvement :				

6.3. Activity Leading and Communication Skills	Completely Achieved	Partially Achieved	Did not Achieve	Not Applicable
A. Teacher smiles and is polite, listens patiently to what the children share.				
B. Teacher's voice has sufficient volume and cadence, and uses body language appropriately.				
C. Able to provide clear demonstrations and give clear instructions.				
D. Able to use the appropriate language modelling for the children.				
E. Appropriately and timely gives praise and encouragement to children.				
F. Able to pose different questions to stimulate children's thoughts.				
G. Able to appropriately respond to and follow children's conversations and behaviour.				
H. Able to respect children's learner autonomy.				
I. Able to encourage interaction between children.				
J. Able to respond to and make adjustments based on children's reactions during the learning process.				
The reason for "Partially Achieved / Did not Achieve" and advice for improvement :				

6.4. Routines and Guidance	Completely Achieved	Partially Achieved	Did not Achieve
A. Able to use different methods and provide positive guidance to help the children follow routines and respect the rules.			
B. Able to understand and properly execute safety procedures			
C. Able to observe children's health and behaviour and manage it appropriately.			
D. Able to treat children fairly and provide attentive care.			
The reason for "Partially Achieved / Did not Achieve" and advice for improvement :			

2

Reflection and Advice for Improvement :

You are required to choose one of the three categories listed below that you believe can be "completely achieved" based on Section 6, to discuss and analyse how the chosen category can help children comprehend the learning objectives.

- Content and Design :
- Activity Leading and Communication Skills :
- Routines and Guidance :

Reflection on The Diversified Learning Materials

Name and Photo of Learning Material	Suitable for the Emphasis of the Activity			Able to allow children to have hands-on experience			Advice for Improvement
	Compl etely Achie ved	Partia lly Achie ved	Not Achie ved	Compl etely Achie ved	Partia lly Achie ved	Not Achie ved	

Understanding of Children's Learning Needs and Abilities

(Please choose one of the children in the group, observe and analyse his/her learning needs and how he/she displays his/her abilities)

Observation record of the children's behaviour and conversation	Your understanding and experience of the children's needs, abilities, and interests