Promoting pre-service EFL teacher reflection: An investigation of reflection levels in Thai context

Rosukhon Swatevacharkul

*ELT Program, Graduate School of Human Sciences, Assumption University (592/3 Soi Ramkhamhaeng 24
Ramkhamhaeng Rd., Hua Mak, Bangkok 10240), Thailand*

ABSTRACT
Reflection is essential for the teaching practice course since it enhances life-long professional teaching development of the teachers. Capacity to reflect needs to be developed. The objectives of this study were (1) to investigate the levels of learning reflection of pre-service EFL teachers at the end of the teaching practice course, and (2) to explore how reflection contributes to changes of the reflection levels. This study took the form of an embedded experimental mixed methods research design using a close and open-ended questionnaire and semi-structured interview to collect data from 13 international students at an MA ELT program. Data analysis was performed by a t-test and thematic content analysis. The findings revealed that 1) on average, the level of Habitual Action, Understanding, and Critical Reflection at the beginning and the end of the course was not significantly different. However, the level of Reflection was significantly different at the end of the course. Three themes -(1) Revision of past experiences for teaching improvement; (2) Thinking and writing skills development, and (3) Change of beliefs and teaching techniques- were generated causing such reflection capacity changes. Recommendations were provided for further research in this area.

Keywords: Collaborative reflection; levels of reflection; pre-service EFL teachers; verbal reflection; written reflection

INTRODUCTION
Teaching practice (TP) with supervised teaching is a crucial part of and included in most English language teacher's education programs (Gebhard, 2009). Reflection is essential for the TP since performing reflections helps life-long professional teaching development of the teachers, which enables them to critique their teaching and make better decision (Burton, 2009). For a long-term goal, as argued by Black, Sileo, and Prater (2012) pre-service preparation programs should include reflection as a means to assist future educators for effective practice which will be important for their professional roles.

Gaining its popularity in most English teacher education and development programs, reflective practice well reflects the student-centered learning approach promoting students to apply the theories of teaching into practice and learn to deal with complex teaching situations arising during the teaching. Reflection after teaching can also help improve their next teaching performance by reviewing their teaching experiences and planning for better teaching performance. As Schon (1991 cited in Mann & Walsh, 2017) addresses, the role of reflective practice as a process of professional development is to understand and improve practice because it can shed light on students' teaching practice and improve it which helps them become better teachers. This professional practice aims to equip students with capacities to cope with multi-faceted problems (Schon, 1987 cited in Kember,

Leung, Jones, Loke, McKay, Sinclair, & Yeung, 2000). As argued by Farrell (2004) "experience itself is actually not the "greatest teacher," for we do not learn as much from experience as we learn from reflecting on that experience" (p. 7). Therefore, the quality of students' reflections on their learning and behaviors needs to be developed, and this is one of the current higher education learning goals (Leijen, Valtna, Leijen, & Pedaste 2012).

Reflection, reflective practice or reflective thinking is generally used interchangeably. According to Dewey (1993 cited in Farrell, 2018), reflection is valuable in terms of open-mindedness, responsibility, and whole-heartedness, and these are the prerequisite for successful reflection. To elaborate, open-mindedness is a desire to listen to more than one side of an issue and take other choices into consideration. Responsibility deals with a careful consideration of the consequences and willingness to accept them. Whole-heartedness means that teachers can overcome fears and doubts to critically evaluate their practice in order to make meaningful personal and professional change (Farrell, 2004). These are the three crucial qualities of teaching and clearly show a relationship between effective reflection and good teaching practice.

In foreign language teaching field, there is no exact definition of reflection. However, in general, reflection means "conscious thinking about what we are doing and why we are doing it" (Farrell, 2015, p. 8). For second language education, "reflective practice has emerged as an approach where teachers actively collect data about their teaching beliefs and practices and then reflect on the data in order to direct future teaching decisions" (Farrell, 2015, p. 8). Reflective practitioners are trained to exercise their autonomy. According to Farrell (2004), attempting to reflect on their practice, teachers proactively embark upon taking control of their working lives. They, therefore, are more empowered for their decision making by engaging in systematic reflections of their work by thinking, writing, and talking about their teaching, and observing their own and others' teaching practices, and judging the influence of their teaching on their student's learning.

Though there is less agreement on how to do reflective practice (Farrell, 2015), written reflection in a form of journal writing has gained its popularity. One case study research showed that regular journal writing results in teacher's self-awareness as a teacher and constructively changes her behaviors both inside and outside the classroom (Farrell, 2013). Written reflection also helps develop thinking and writing skills of EFL students in Thai context (Swatevacharkul, 2018).

However, criticism of written reflection is that it is rather a 'self' business, including either self-observation or self-examination (Glaser-Zikuda, 2012). Arguably, reflection should be more interactive. Therefore, Mann and Walsh (2017) strongly emphasize dialogic reflection as dialogs provide a chance for clarification, questioning and better understanding. This involves social interaction among related persons such as a peer or experienced colleague, mentor or teacher educator. Based on the socio-cultural theory which emphasizes teachers learn from their own and others' practice, Mann and Walsh (2017) assert that "professional development is fundamentally a social process" (p. 11). Social interaction is a central part of learning because learning occurs when learners interact with experts and other related people to discuss ideas allowing internalizations of knowledge and perspectives which encourage deeper quality of reflection and reflective thinking. Therefore, verbal reflection has been increasingly important for collaborative teacher development. Strongly argued by Mann and Walsh (2017), written reflection should not be separated from verbal reflection.

Supported by Gan (2014), social interaction is crucial for the new patterns of thought and strategic behaviors development. Learning is socially mediated, thus significant others are beneficial for learning. Gan's study revealed that teachers, supervisors, school staff members, and peer student-teachers taking the role of coach, either directly or indirectly have a positive influence on student-teachers. Similarly, the study conducted by Erginel (2006) in Turkey shows that the 30 pre-service teachers valued the important role of collaboration in promoting reflection. This is clear that positive perception towards reflection is fundamental for and appears to have an impact on reflection practice. Also, collaborative reflection performed through social interaction in the learning process is helpful to enhance learning.

There are four levels of reflection, according to Kember, McKay, Sinclair, & Wong (2008) who developed a questionnaire to measure the level of reflective thinking. First, *Habitual action* or non-reflection is that which occurs with little conscious thought. This level is similar to surface learning. The example is when a student provides an answer even though he or she does not understand the concept or theory underpinning it. Second, *Understanding* level is consistent with a deep learning approach and it occurs when a student makes an attempt to understand a concept or a topic. That is when a student tries to understand the underlying meaning. This level does not imply that students reflect if they do not relate the concept to personal experiences or real-life applications, which creates no personal meaning and no assimilation into the knowledge structure of the students. The third level, *Reflection,* occurs when students take and consider a concept with regard to their personal experiences, and then apply the theory. Personal meaning is created as they relate the concept to other knowledge and experience. Simply put, students try to apply the theory based on what they understand about the concept. *Critical reflection* is the highest level and implies an undergoing perspective transformation. "To undergo a change in perspective requires us to recognize and change these presumptions. To undergo critical reflection, it is necessary to conduct a critical review of presuppositions from conscious and unconscious prior

learning and their consequences" (Kember et al., 2008, p. 374). However, this level of reflection should not be expected early during a developmental reflective process of the students because a conceptual change is deeply embedded and difficult to occur.

As reflection is performed at a different level, Bain, Ballantyne, and Packer (2002) suggest that teachers' feedback to student-teachers' reflections focusing on the level of reflection achieved would be more effective to improve writing reflections than feedback emphasizing what a teacher teaches.

In terms of research in Thai context, there is limited research on reflective practice of pre-service teachers and their capacity of reflection. To fill this gap, this present study promoted reflection with the student-teachers in the TP course and proposed to investigate the levels of learning reflection of pre-service EFL teachers at the end of the TP course with the hypotheses: there will be a significant difference of the levels of reflection at the end of the TP course, and to explore how performing reflection contributes to changes of the reflection levels. Reflection in this study refers to verbal and written reflection. Verbal reflection means students perform collaborative feedback given in speaking with their peers, a course supervisor, and a school mentor. Written reflection refers to a weekly journal writing by each student after their microteaching (MT) and TP. More details are in the data collection procedures section. The findings will contribute to the teacher education in Thailand on student-teachers reflection performance which mirrors their teaching professional development and possible factors that may help improve or hinder their reflective practice ability.

Besides, this research will pave the way for further research in this area.

METHOD
The participants were 13 graduate students aged between 24 and 41 years in the English Language Teaching (ELT) program of the third or summer semester of the academic year 2017 at a private university located in Bangkok, Thailand. Among them, there were 9 Thai students, 3 Chinese students, and 1 Myanmar student. Half of them have some teaching experiences as a part time job, while two of them are full time school teachers. Another half does not have teaching experience.

The participants enrolled in the required 45-hour TP course offered on Sunday for 7 weeks from end of May to end of June 2018. The first 21 hours were devoted on lesson plan design and MT. Then, with a buddy, the student practiced teaching at a private school in Bangkok but with different class levels. They taught approximately 50 Thai students from grades 2 to 8 on every Tuesday and Thursday for three consecutive weeks with a school mentor and a TP course supervisor. Each class took 50 minutes and emphasized English communication skills. These students had experiences writing weekly reflections on the teaching methodology course during semester 1.

This study took a form of a variant of mixed methods approach, which is an embedded experimental design. Qualitative data were embedded with a quantitative experimental design (Ivankova & Creswell, 2009) for a purpose of triangulation in the interpretation phase. Figure 1 displays the research design.
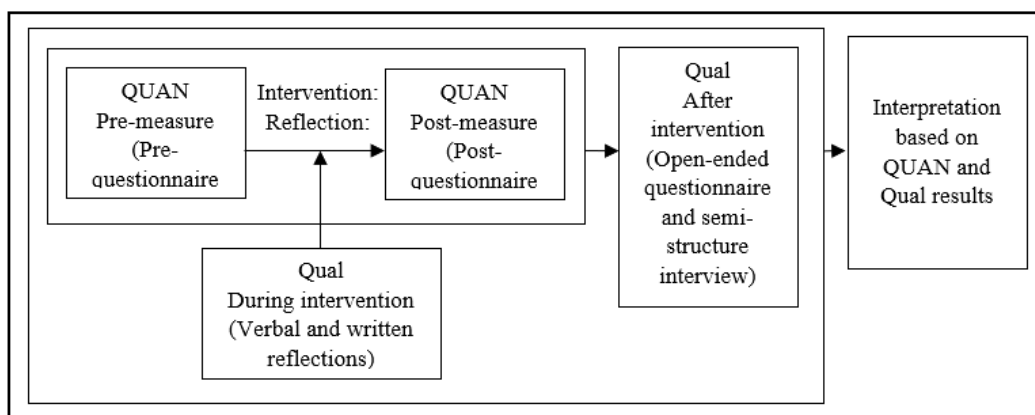

Figure 1. Embedded experimental mixed methods design

To collect data for research objective 1, the reflection questionnaire developed by Kember et al. (2008) was employed to measure the reflection levels. The 5-point Likert Scale questionnaire consists of 4 levels of reflections, that is, Habitual, Understanding, Reflection, and Critical Reflection. There are 16 items divided into 4 items for each level. The four scales or constructs have been established by the use of confirmatory factor analysis, and the items demonstrated a good fit to the intended factor structure.

The reliability of the four scales (0.62, 0.75, 0.63, and 0.67 respectively) was confirmed satisfactorily by the use of Cronbach alpha (Kember et al., 2000). Although the questionnaire was designed for assessing written reflections of the students, it can be used as a quantitative data collection tool for this study of the levels of reflection. The interpretation of each level of reflection is as follows: 4.21-5.00 means very high, 3.41-4.20 means high, 2.61-3.40 means moderate, 1.81-2.60 means low, and 1.00-1.80 means very low.

For research objective 2, the three questions with the acceptable content validity of 0.77 were used. Minor modifications were made according to the three validators' comments and suggestions.

1. Are reflections important to your learning and teaching? How? Please explain. (To explore importance or benefits of reflection perceived by students)
2. In what ways do reflections influence your learning and teaching practice? (To explore impact of reflection on their learning)
3. Thinking about your TP, to what extent did you change your teaching practice in this school context from what you generally believe, do, or plan to do? (To explore critical reflection)

To clarify the answers from the questionnaire and to support discussion, semi-structured interview was conducted with three students to gain insightful information and feeling about their ability in doing reflections on their teaching performance this semester. The same questionnaire questions were then employed.

Regarding data collection procedures, a student-teacher worked with a buddy who shares the teaching lessons. They planned the lessons together and taught the same lesson but for a different group of students. Engaging in the reflective practice during the TP course of seven weeks, the student-teachers were required to write six written reflections: one after their MT, one after the first seminar held after the MT, three after each three weeks of the TP at the school, and one after the second seminar held after the end of the TP.

Note that for verbal reflection, students performed verbal collaborative feedback (VCF) with their peers and course supervisor as a whole class activity after their MT in class which focused on strengths, weaknesses and improvement areas for next teaching which they wrote in the worksheet. The VCF session was considered an interactive feedback giving process for the students to collaboratively help each other learn from their teaching experience. During the VCF they learned how to provide their interactive and constructive feedback to their peers. After that, they wrote individually two pages reflection outside class time with no guiding questions since they should synthesize all feedback from VCF for their written reflection. The following week, they received feedback, response to their thoughts or questions if any, and comments from the course supervisor.

For the TP at the school, the students were required to write weekly reflection with some guiding questions suggested and adapted from Allwright and Lenzuen (1997 cited in Mann & Walsh, 2017): What did you teach/do?, What did you do well?, What are puzzling or troubling or interesting phenomenon?, What are areas for development?, How did you feel about your teaching?, and What sort of feedback have found the most helpful and the least helpful? The students had verbal feedback with their school mentor, teaching buddy, and course supervisor after each teaching period.

Note that seminar after the MT and the TP was held in class and each student presented what they learned from the MT and TP. In fact, they presented their own reflection on the TP. Then, the two groups of 6-7 student performed group interactive collaborative reflection (GICR) after the presentations. The guiding questions for the GICR were: What do you learn from his/her teaching experiences? and Do you have any suggestions for further improvement? Table 1 details the summary of the data collection process.

Table 1. Data collection procedures

Week	Class activities	Outside class activity
1.	MT1/VCF with a buddy, peers and instructor	Written reflection 1
2.	MT20/VCF with a buddy, peers and instructor	
3.	Seminar 1/GICR	Written reflection 2
4.	TP1/VCF with a buddy, mentor and instructor	Written reflection 3
5.	TP2/VCF with a buddy, mentor and instructor	Written reflection 4
6.	TP3/VCF with a buddy, mentor and instructor	Written reflection 5
7.	Seminar 2/GICR	Written reflection 6

Data Analysis for research objective 1, although the sample size is small, a dependent samples t-test can be used to test the hypotheses (de Winter, 2013). For the second research objective, the qualitative data were analyzed using a thematic content analysis in terms of frequency counts by identifying units of coding and defining coding categories. Information written in short paragraphs relevant to the questions asked were coded and analyzed to find emerged themes. Pearson correlation showed the intra-coder reliability of 0.95. The categories were presented with a frequency count and percentage, and then some relevant excerpts with keywords or phrases underlined were presented.

RESULTS

For research objective 1, the results are displayed in Table 2.

Table 2 showed that, on average, the level of Habitual Action, Understanding, and Critical Reflection at the outset of the TP (M = 3.76, SD = 0.70, M = 4.52, SD = 0.50, and M = 4.13, SD = 0.74 respectively) and that after the course (M = 3.89, SD = 0.81, M = 4.48, SD = 0.44, and M = 4.58, SD = 0.39 respectively) was not significantly different (p = 0.05). This means that, on average, the level of these three scales of the reflection is more or less the same between the pre- and post- questionnaire. On the other hand, it was found that the level of Reflection at the outset of the TP (M = 4.29, SD = 0.59) and that after the course (M = 4.71, SD = 0.30) was significantly different (p = 0.05). This suggests that, on average, the level of Reflection at the end significantly increased from the beginning of the course.

Table 2. The differences between each level of reflection

Level of Reflection		n	Mean	SD	Meaning	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Habitual Action	Pre	13	3.76	0.70	High	12	0.46
	Post	13	3.89	0.81	High		
Understanding	Pre	13	4.52	0.50	Very high	12	0.69
	Post	13	4.48	0.44	Very high		
Reflection	Pre	13	4.29	0.59	Very high	12	0.05*
	Post	13	4.71	0.30	Very high		
Critical Reflection	Pre	13	4.13	0.74	High	12	0.08
	Post	13	4.58	0.39	Very high		

Table 2 also revealed a comparative mean of the pre- and post-questionnaire. The Habitual Action level of the pre- and post-questionnaire was at a high level while the Understanding level was at a very high level. Likewise, the Reflection was not different at a very high level. It is interesting to find that Critical Reflection was at a high level at the outset of the course but changed to very high at the end and this is worth discussion.

For research objective 2, there are three emerging themes in relation to the factors causing changes of the levels of reflection: 1) Revision of past experiences for teaching improvement; 2) Thinking and writing skills development, and 3) Change of beliefs and teaching techniques. Note that themes 1 and 2 emerged from the first and second open-ended questions on importance and impacts of reflections. The findings were well triangulated, while theme 3 emerged from the third open-ended question on the extent of change of the students' teaching practice at the school. Examples of excerpts from the students' reflections are italicized.

Theme 1: Revision of past experiences for teaching improvement
The findings (Table 3) from the question: Are reflections important to your learning and teaching? How? Please explain generated theme 1. The findings showed that every student agreed on the benefits or importance of reflection to provide opportunities to review past learning and teaching experiences. By so doing, they could see their weaknesses or mistakes from the teaching practice. Plans for improvement for next teaching was then carefully considered to avoid the same mistakes and deliver more effective teaching. At the same time, reviewing what they did and receiving peers' feedback also allowed them to see their strengths and confirm certain aspects of their teaching. These findings converged with the results of the second question (Table 4) which displayed the major impact of reflections on improving their teaching performance.

My reflections are <u>really beneficial</u> to my learning and teaching since the time to write my self-reflection is as the time that allows me to <u>review</u> about my <u>passing learning and teaching</u>. Moreover, I can use my reflections as records to <u>improve</u> my learning and teaching in the future. (S#3)

Yes, the reflections are beneficial for my learning and teaching. I can get some mistakes that have to improve. When I got my reflection paper for my teaching, I read the details carefully and thought how to prepare my good teaching for the next class. For instance, my <u>mentor</u> gave me feedback that I had to speak loudly in class so I spoke louder. Besides, I can use the result to <u>evaluate</u> my learning and teaching. <u>Feedback from other people</u> who are professional is very useful for me and feedback from my peers is also good suggestions. (S#2)

Table 3. Revision of past experiences for teaching improvement

Benefits	Frequency count	%	Total	Theme
1. Review past experience	6	27.27	90.82	1
2. Plan for improvement	6	27.27		
3. See weaknesses/ mistakes	5	22.73		
4. Enhance strengths	3	13.64		
5. Improve writing skills	1	4.55	4.55	2
6. Obtain peer reflections	1	4.55	4.55	1

Theme 2: Thinking and writing skills development
From Table 4, the findings on the second question: *In what ways do reflections influence your learning and teaching practice?* revealed that reflections had a major impact on students' thinking and writing skills development (35.30%) which then improve their teaching performance (Theme 1). Before writing a reflection, the student-teachers reported that they had to think carefully and critically about what they did, their students, and feedback received. They assessed themselves whether their teaching performance was effective in terms of cognitive and affective dimensions. Thinking logically and cautiously also allowed them to see their teaching strengths and weaknesses. Problems could be prevented or solved for better teaching. In addition, written reflections on a weekly basis is of great benefits for writing skill improvement. Grammar accuracy and good organization are necessary to produce a good piece of written reflection to convey comprehensible messages.

Table 4. Thinking and writing skills development

Impact	Frequency count	%	Total	Theme
1. Teaching performance	10	58.82	58.82	1
2. Thinking skills	3	17.65	35.30	2
3. Writing skills	3	17.65		
4. Content understanding	1	5.88	5.88	-

It helps in improving teaching techniques; how I could use the suitable teaching method to each class and how I could find an interesting activity that could be fun, interesting as well as could give related knowledge to students. (S#1)

Reflection can help me evaluate my teaching critically. And reflection lets me think more about the students and myself so that my class can be more student-centered. I can write the lesson plans according to the different classes. (S#11)

In writing skills – I have a better writing skill because I did write reflections more often this semester. Reflections allow me to understand areas of weakness in my writing such as redundant words and grammatical errors. As a result, I become better and more confident writers. Thinking skill – It is like I'm looking into a mirror and describe what I see and be able to assessing myself. It helps me think about something logically and cautiously such as what are my strengths" what are my weaknesses? What problems are there while I'm teaching? Or how can I do it better? (S#6).

Theme 3: Change of beliefs and teaching methods
The third open-ended question: Thinking about your TP, to what extent did you change your teaching practice in this school context from what you generally believe, do, or plan to do? Please explain mainly aimed to explore critical reflection of the students. It was found that change and drastic change happened to the majority (12 students), while one student reported a slight change. Responses were categorized into two major types of changes that are teaching methods (61.54%) and beliefs about teaching(38.46%), as displayed in Table 5. In terms of teaching methods, students reported a preference of communicative language teaching (CLT), collaborative learning (with doubt of its effectiveness in a large classroom), eclectic methods, use of various types of learning materials, drill, and autonomous learning process. For beliefs, students mentioned their increased confidence to teach and their change to apply student-centered approach to promote student independence from a teacher. Also, knowing and understanding each student is important, besides having effective teaching performance and content knowledge.

Table 5. Changes of beliefs and teaching methods

Two types of changes	Frequency count	%	Theme
1. Teaching methods: CLT, Collaborative learning (questionable), Eclectic methods, Use of various materials, Drill, Autonomous learning	8	61.54	3
2. Beliefs: Increased self-confidence, Student-dependence/centeredness, Knowledge and understanding of students	5	38.46	3

I didn't change much from what I believe but <u>a little bit</u> when it comes to a <u>teaching technique and method</u>. Due to the school context and classroom, the drills and Suggestopedia worked quite well but I had to change a bit about the <u>collaborative learning</u> that I need to create the activity that would be suitable and flexible related to my belief. (S#1)

I <u>strongly believe</u> in <u>collaborative learning</u> which can occur peer-to-peer or in groups. ... But after my TP, I taught young learners and I found out that to let them work together was such a chaos. This made me <u>think twice</u> about collaborative learning among young learners. ... (S#6)

My <u>beliefs</u> have been <u>diverse</u> from the first day I stepped into the ELT program. I thought teaching is <u>only knowledge</u> which I must acquire as much as I can because my students must rely on me, mostly. ... The school of thought reflects my teaching style and belief. Now, I confess that I support my students to be an autonomous learner. My teaching guides them to be able to rely on themselves by having me on their side. That is life-long learning. ... (S#7)

Regarding the integration of mixed-methods findings, themes 1 and 2 converged with the findings on the third reflection level: Reflection. This is based on the facts that reflections enable reviewing of past experiences for further teaching improvement and encourage thinking and writing skills, especially on item 10: *I like to think over what I have been doing and consider alternative ways of doing it*, and item 12: *I often re-appraise my experience so I can learn from it and improve for my next performance*. Theme 3 converged with the quantitative findings of the fourth reflection level: Critical Reflection. The change of beliefs and teaching methods theme supports the quantitative Critical Reflection findings which improved from a high to very high level although without a statistically significant difference.

DISCUSSION
The findings on the high Habitual level, while the rest are very high, corroborated the research results of Kember et al. (2000) revealing that it is significantly

less likely for the postgraduate students to engage in habitual action but significantly more likely to search for understanding or engage in reflection or critical reflection than the undergraduates. The statistically significant difference in terms of the Reflection level and very high level of Critical Reflection clearly suggested that an integration of verbal and written reflection on performance are effective to increase capacities for reflections which may be due to the following explanations.

First, reflection is a training tool for development of self-awareness and self-regulated behaviors. The finding on teacher self awareness promoted through journal writing is in line with Farrell's (2013) study. According to theme 1, *Revision of past experiences to teaching improvement* was perceived as beneficially important. Capacities of reflective thinking mediated and assisted by peers, mentors, and course supervisor definitely enhance more self-awareness of the student-teachers. They are more aware of their strengths and weaknesses as well as how to improve and plan the lessons for each different class bearing learner differences in mind. It is to check and monitor their teaching performance. Simply put, collaborative feedback helps develop self-awareness of their teaching.

At the same time, self-awareness of their good and weak points resulted from verbal reflection combined with written reflection contribute to a formation of self-regulated behaviors. As Farrell (2004) argues, "we change as a result of the *awareness* brought about by engaging in reflection" (p. 27). Clearly, awareness appears to influence behaviors, or teaching performance in this case, which in turn enhances capacities for a higher level of reflection. This may be the reason why they often re-appraised their teaching experience to learn from it and improve it for their next teaching performance according to the questionnaire which showed a very highly significant difference at the end of the TP. Performing teaching practice allows them to try different teaching methods and techniques, appraise and re-appraise their performance. They analyze and evaluate themselves for better teaching performance. This continuous reflection process appears to encourage self-awareness which then shapes their regulated behaviors to be responsible for their teaching and improve their teaching performance.

Second, significant parties in a collaborative learning process play a crucial role in providing interactive feedback for further teaching improvement. In this study, the student-teachers were trained to give interactive and constructive feedback to each others during the VCF and GICR. As Farrell (2004) suggests, group discussion helps reflective practice. Similar to the research findings (Erginel, 2006), collaboration is perceived valuable in promoting reflection. After each teaching practice at the school, they had verbal conversation to discuss their teaching experience with their buddy, mentor and later with their course supervisor. By doing this, they learn from each others, then synthesize and exploit the feedback and comment

for further improvement. As Farrell (2004) argues, "teachers' awareness of what happens in their classrooms and accurate monitoring of their own and students' behavior enable teachers to function more effectively. To achieve this, engagement in personal reflection and reflective conversation with others is necessary" (p. 8). Supported by the empirical evidence of this study, a student expressed her positive attitude and value towards the comments of others *"I think my ability in doing reflection this semester improves because I understand more how to write reflection. When I wrote self-reflection, I would take notes about my weaknesses and some others' feedback. ... I could apply PDCA (Plan, Do, Check, Act) model to enhance my ability in doing reflection. It helped me to improve my organization, my critical thinking, and so on" (S#3).* The implication is critical but warm and constructive comments are crucial to develop positive attitude and emotion of their teaching practice. Students should thus be trained on how to be a critical friend to give cognitively productive and emotionally encouraging feedback for further improvement on teaching. Ability to settle conflicts that can arise among peer student-teachers is also necessary (Gan, 2014).

Third, there is a relationship among thinking, writing and teaching as shown by the second theme: *Thinking and writing skills development.* Corroborated with the findings of Swatevacharkul (2018), written reflection on teaching performance promotes thinking skills and develops conscious thinking capacities. As argued by Farrell (2015), reflection means conscious thinking about our actions. The student-teachers need to show their understanding of the basic relevant contents or concepts and then apply them when doing a written reflection. This may be the reason why the second reflection level: Understanding also gained a very high level. Understanding of the theories or fundamental concepts or contents is essential for a higher level of self-reflection. The interview data supported this argument. *"I think my ability in doing reflection this semester is better than the last two semesters. I can do it deeper and can think more according to the ELT domain. My thinking relates to teaching and can reflect more according to some theories of teaching." (S#1).* Supported by another student *"I am quite satisfied with the ability to do my reflections this semester. I used to write the descriptive reflection which is normally just a description of the events that I have encountered and I didn't think too much about how I could solve the problems. But now I noticed myself writing the reflection from what I really reflect from the events. I think deeper about how I could improve and develop when I write. I think more systematically in sequencing orders and it's not the descriptive reflection anymore" (S#2).*

This clearly implies that thinking and writing capacity supports each other and should be promoted during the TP course. With the collaborative reflection process, consciously thinking about feedback, comment and suggestion of the other people, analyzing and

synthesizing them before writing a reflection has more potential to increase the learners' capacities of reflective thinking and writing which then assists developing better teaching performance. As Ur (1999) argues, reflecting on own classroom practices enhances personal teaching progress and analytical thinking skills. Simply put, becoming more reflective promoted by both verbal and written reflections enhances the student-teachers' understanding of their own thought and action of teaching.

Last, collaborative reflection is an empowerment process for increased critical reflection development. Supporting Farrell's (2004) argument, the evidence did show that collaborative reflective practice on performance in the real context or the school in this present study is effective as an empowerment process to aid critical reflection ability. The findings generated from theme 3: *Change of beliefs and teaching techniques* clearly prove that reflection empowers students to develop their capacity of more critical reflection. As the quantitative findings showed, the only one level of critical reflection increased from *high* to *very high* although with no statistically significant difference (p=0.08).

Collaborative reflections on practice can bring concrete changes to the beliefs, perspectives and values. As Farrell (2013) maintains, to reflect on practice teachers must learn how to critically analyze their own beliefs about the instructional process so as to be more responsible for their classroom actions. As the qualitative findings revealed, discussing with a buddy, students questions the usefulness of communicative approach using a collaborative group work with a large class of 50 young learners. Thinking about this learning situation and more effective class management they decided to find new more effective ways to teach in this particular learning context. This collaborative reflection on performance promotes autonomy which requires their responsibility for any consequences of their decisions and actions (van Lier, 2008). This develops self-confidence and self-esteem to cope with difficulties arising from their teaching situation. The affective aspect is crucial and should not be ignored to be developed during the reflective practice process. Reflection on performance appears to be helpful to fulfill this affective objective. However, the quantitative findings were not surprising as the teaching practice at the school took only three weeks which are too short to observe any significant difference in this level. To be able to reflect critically requires undergoing perspective transformation and this conceptual change is not easy to occur (Kember et al., 2008).

CONCLUSION

The findings revealed that, on average, the level of Reflection was significantly different while the other three were not. The qualitative findings showed that verbal and written reflection on teaching performance is effective to develop reflective thinking ability and

improve the quality of student's reflection as it provides the opportunities for revision of past teaching experiences for improved teaching and develop thinking and writing skills leading to better teaching performance. Also, collaborative reflection activates critical thinking regarding the qualities of teaching which has the impact on perspective changes of teaching methods suitable for the context and beliefs of language learning processes. It is concluded that collaborative reflection in speaking emphasizing social interaction among significant others and written reflection should complement each other to promote more effective reflective practice in action of the pre-service EFL teachers.

For research recommendations, this current study was conducted with a small sample size within a short period of time, so the findings should be treated with care and caution. Further research projects are suggested to confirm the findings. Also, analysis of the written and verbal reflections should be useful in studying what the student-teachers reflected which can provide stronger empirical evidence of a level of reflection to strengthen the findings obtained from self-report results and a developmental process of their thinking and doing.

REFERENCES

Bain, J. D., Mills, C., Ballantyne, R., & Packer, J. (2002). Developing reflection on practice through journal writing: Impacts of variations in the focus and level of feedback. *Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice, 8*(2), 171-196. doi:10.1080/13540600220127368

Black, R. S., Sileo, T. W., & Prater, M. A. (2012). Learning journals, self-reflection, and university students' changing perceptions. *Action in Teacher Education, 21*(4), 71-89. doi: 10.1080/01626620.2000.10462982

Burton, J. (2009). Reflective practice. In A. Burns & J. C. Richards. (Eds:), *Second language teacher education.* (pp: 289-297). Cambridge: CUP.

de Winter, J.C.F. (2013). Using the student's *t*-test with extremely small sample sizes. *Practical Assessment, Research & Evaluation, 18*(10), 1-12.

Erginel, S. Ş (2006). *Developing reflective teachers: a study on perception and improvement of reflection in pre-service teacher education.* (npublished doctoral dissertation). Middle East University, Amman, Jordan.

Farrell, T.S.C. (2004). *Reflective practice in action.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Farrell, T.S.C. (2013). Teacher self-awareness through journal writing. *Reflective Practice, 14*(4), 465-471. doi: 10.1080/14623943.2013.806300

Farrell, T.S.C. (2015). *Promoting teacher reflection in second language education.* Oxon: Routledge.

Farrell, T.S.C. (2018). *Research on reflective practice in TESOL.* Oxon: Routledge.

Gan, Z. (2014). Learning from interpersonal interactions during the practicum: A case study of non-native ESL student teachers. *Journal of Education for Teaching, 40*(2), 128-139. doi:10.1080/02607476.2013.869969

Gebhard, J, G: (2009): The practicum: In A, Burns & J. C. Richards. (Eds:), *Second language teacher education.* (pp: 250-258): Cambridge: CUP.

Glaser-Zikuda, M. (2012). Self-reflecting methods of learning research. In Seel, N. H. (Ed). *Encyclopedia of the Sciences of Learning.* Boston, MA: Springer.

Ivankova, N.V. & Creswell, J.W. (2009). Mixed methods. In J. Heigham and R.A. Croker. (Eds.), *Qualitative Research in Applied Linguistics: A Practical Introduction.* (pp: 135-161): Hampshire: Palgrave McMillan.

Kember, D., Leung, D. Y. P., Jones, A., Loke, A. Y. McKay, J., Sinclair, K., & Yeung, E. (2000). Development of a questionnaire to measure the level of effective thinking. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education, 25*(4), 381- 395. doi:10.1080/713611442

Kember, D., McKay, J., Sinclair, K., & Wong, F. K. Y. (2008). A four-category scheme for coding and assessing the level of reflection in written work. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education, 33*(4), 369-379. doi:10.1080/02602930701293355

Leijen, A., Valtna, K. Leijen, D.A.J., & Pedaste, M. (2012). How to determine the quality of students' reflections? *Study in Higher Education, 37* (2), 203-217. doi:10.1080/03075079.2010.504814

Mann, S. & Walsh, S. (2017). *Reflective practice in English language teaching*. Oxon: Routledge.

Swatevacharkul, R. (2018). Written reflections and learning development: perceptions of pre-service EFL teachers. *Proceedings in I-SEEC 2018: The 9th International Science, Social Science, Engineering and Energy Conference* (pp. 147-166). Retrieved from http://www.iseec2018.kbu.ac.th/eProceeding/I-SEEC-2018-e-Proceeding.pdf

Ur, P. (1999). *A course in language teaching: Practice and theory.* Cambridge: CUP.

Van Lier, L. (2008). Agency in the classroom. In J. P. Lantolf & M.E. Poehner. (Eds.), *Sociocultural Theory and the Teaching of Second Languages.* (pp: 163-186): London: Equinox.