ABSTRACT

This paper aims to present how Reflective Practice (RP) is promoted through the Professional Skills (Pro-skills) Class and describe the transformation of English learners into reflective practitioners. Pro-skills class is a tailored business English class program offered by Wallstreet English (WSE) to its students, especially corporate students, to master some professional set skills in English. The intention for this reflective paper was simply to see if it was possible to enhance corporate students’ self-reflection and convince them that the lessons were essential for their personal and professional development. As a result, they needed to pay closer attention to the class material because my practical experience teaching corporate students revealed that the majority of them attended the class simply because their superiors told them to, and they tended to take all of the lessons for granted. With this in mind, I began this reflective research by introducing the participants to the concept of reflective practice from Jasper (2013), where she introduced the reflection model theory of ERA (Experience, Reflection, Action), which involves a careful distinction between theory and practice in the context of the lessons they have learned in the class. Three questions were formulated to ask the students in a five-minute reflection session before ending each class in the form of a discussion, and the session was promoted for five consecutive weeks. So this paper is fundamentally a teacher’s reflection based on the student’s reflection. The findings indicate that the RP benefits the participants more than just bringing the difference between the theory and the practice in the pro-skills class; In accordance with Philip’s (2006) concept, the RP encourages all students to participate in the session, not just the top performers, and it promotes ‘peer-tutoring’ in some way. The RP also successfully becomes the media for the students to interact, allowing them to be aware of their reflective ability as well as the process that is being followed; this is critical if they are to transfer this skill. By reflecting academically and on job satisfaction in a subject-specific manner, students can gain insight from their mistakes and improve their future learning through RP. Reflection, in other words, includes not only skill development but also subject comprehension and knowledge acquisition. Students can also begin to notice common errors they make and see how far they have progressed. To conclude, RP offers multiple benefits to the students who took part in the research as respondents.

Keywords: Reflective practice - ERA reflection model - business class - corporate students

ABSTRAK


Kata kunci: Reflective practice – Model refleksi ERA – Kelas bisnis – Siswa korporat/karyawan
1. INTRODUCTION

As an active English instructor for several years, I have been observing that some corporate students attended the class simply because their superiors told them to, and they tended to take all the lessons for granted. I got the impression right away that the students were ignorant because the class was interactive and required students’ participation during the class’s discussion or activities, which I found most of them were hesitant to participate in, I assumed they were preoccupied with something else, so eventually, I had to do all the talking.

Finlay (2008) attempted to define the term "reflective practice," which could involve anything from professionals engaging in independent introspection to those interacting in critical discussion with other people. Finlay (2008) then argued that fundamentally, reflection is a crucial aspect of both teaching and learning. It seeks to increase RP practitioners’ awareness of their own professional knowledge and action by "challenging presumptions of regular practice and critically evaluating practitioners' own reactions to professional contexts.”. Ogonor and Badmus (2006) indicated that a large proportion of trainees in their research confirmed that the reflective practice pushed the practitioners to reflect on and become acquainted with the life of the school, which they had previously taken for granted. According to Fook et al (2006), as cited in Finlay (2008), it is understandable why RP varies significantly across disciplines and intellectual traditions, as multiple and incompatible perspectives on reflective practice may occur within the same discipline.

It is generally believed that RP improves teachers’ ability to understand how students learn and the best ways to teach them. Teachers identify any barriers to learning that students have by reflecting on the teaching executions and then create lessons that reteach any material that their students have not been able to access, allowing them to overcome any obstacles and develop. As a result, I initiated this reflective research by introducing the participants to the concept of reflective practice (RP) at the pedagogical level, which involves carefully distinguishing between theory and practice by applying Jasper’s (2013). ERA (Experience, Reflection, Action) reflection model theory. The RP then proceeds with my reflection as a teacher on the RP performed by the students.

Previous research tends to focus on the teachers as active practitioners of RP (Cirocki & Widodo, 2019). (Andrei, Ellerbe, & Kidd, 2019). On the contrary, this paper tries to see the implementation of the RP, and the students are the subject of this study besides the teacher. As people say, ‘It takes two for tango,’ in my opinion, students are also required to participate in class activities actively. The idea was borrowed from Schön (1983) as he believed the RP could help students learn ‘the artistry of practice’, he also thought that teaching the RP was a ‘reflection ladder’ where the students and the teachers reflect upon their acts. Therefore, I dedicated 5 minutes of students’ time before the class ended to do the RP together with the students in the form of a discussion on a pedagogical level on what they learned from that day’s lesson and distinguish how they performed in practice and the theory, and whether or not they would want to adopt the study that had just been taught by adopting the reflection theory of ERA from Jasper (2013).

As this paper aims to present how Reflective Practice (RP) is promoted through the Pro-Skills Class and describe the transformation of English learners into reflective practitioners, one research question emerges from that objective that is; “To what extent would a Reflective Practice session bring the distinction between theory and practice in a pro-skills class to its participants?”

2. METHOD

2.1. Demographic Background of the Subject

Pro-skills class is a tailored business English class program offered by Wallstreet English to its students, especially corporate clients. The main objective of the pro-skills program is to support the students in improving their professional skills in a class setting. The program covers four modules: business meetings, business presentations, business writing, and personal branding. Each module is divided into six sessions; five sessions for studying and ends with one session for assessment. In short, there are 24 meetings, 20 studying sessions, and four assessment sessions. This reflective research focuses on the business writing module (third module). Table 1 presents the class material covered each week in the writing module.
The pro-skills class is delivered online, and Zoom is regularly used as a learning platform. On Tuesdays, it is a two-hour class with no breaks, beginning at 13.30 p.m. and ending at 15.30 p.m. (once a week). Additionally, all the lesson plans, ppts, teaching aids, videos, listening passages, and handouts for participants are set and ready to use by the instructor, and I was assigned to be the class’s instructor (see appendix 1).

The participants of the class detailed as follows:

- NET TV employees, 24 names signed up, approximately only 5-10 people attended the class each time.
- Predominantly in pre-intermediate, intermediate level of English proficiency (see Appendix 2)
- Different work backgrounds, e.g., legal officer, tax officer, satellite manager, application-based manager, IT officer, etc.
- Presumably, young adults (25-39 years old)

2.2. Model of Reflection

Jasper (2013) argued that RP had been recognized as one of the major points that people learn from their experiences; this has been an essential tool to help students to draw a clear line between theory and practice. Further, Jasper (2013) claims that the RP enables learners to develop their knowledge and skills toward becoming professional practitioners. RP is also distinct from acquiring skills by observing others or imitating what others do because it involves conscious thinking and actively making decisions. That is why the RP bridges the gap between theory and directed practice by providing a strategy that supports enhanced understanding in learning.

According to Jasper (2013), reflective practice as a concept for learning was first introduced into many professions in the 1980s. It is viewed as one of the ways that professionals learn from their experiences to comprehend and develop their practice.

The idea behind this is relatively uncomplicated. Fundamentally, RP means that we learn by thinking about things that have occurred to us and seeing them differently, which determines our actions for future reference.
The RP can be recapped as having three elements:
- Events that occur in a person’s life.
- The reflective processes that allow a person to gain insight from their experiences.
- The action resulted from the new point of view adopted.

These can be summarized as experience-reflection-action (ERA) and seen as a cycle (see Figure 1).

2.3. Procedures of Doing the Reflection

This paper adopted the reflection model theory of ERA (Experience, Reflection, Action) introduced by Jasper (2013). Schön (1983) thought that the RP might assist learners to understand "the artistry of practice," and that teaching the RP was a "reflection ladder" in which both students and teachers reflected on how they performed. Hence, I dedicated 5 minutes of students' time before the class ended to do the RP together with the students in the form of a pedagogical conversation on what they learned from that day's lesson and distinguish how they performed in practice and theory, as well as whether or not they would want to adopt the study that had just been taught by adopting Jasper's reflection theory of ERA. (2013). The RP then continues with my reflection as a teacher on the student's RP.

The reflection model theory of ERA is indicated as one of the simplest models of reflection because it only consists of three steps: experience, reflection, and action. In the experience phase, either one has been through before or something entirely new for them, either positive or negative, may relate to the work or something else. Once something has been accomplished, it may lead to reflective practice, where people start reflecting on what happened. This will let ones think through the experience, examine ones’ feelings about what they stumbled upon and decide on the next step. This leads to the final element of the cycle: taking action. People's decisions because of an experience will vary depending on the individual. This decision will result in another experience, and the cycle will keep going.

Three questions were formulated to reflect upon those three stages of the ERA cycle:
1. How did you operate/view things before the class in the context of the language taught in the class? (Experience)
2. How do you see things after the class? / What did you learn? (Reflection)
3. Do you want or do not want to adopt the lesson you have just learned in class? (Action)

Those three questions I asked during the five-minute reflective session with the students in the form of discussion (orally) before ending each class for five consecutive weeks (see appendix 3). As I had the students’ consent, the five-minute reflective session was recorded. In the end, I wrapped up this project by asking a closed-ended question, “Does this five-minute reflective session effective for your learning process in the class? Why or why not?” I asked the students to write me the response via email, and as a result, I received four email responses. I proceeded with the RP process by investigating students' behaviour and responses to this RP during the five-minute reflective session along with their email responses.

3. Reflective Points: Students’ Reflection

I admit that doing a reflective practice is not that simple because it requires critical thinking to recall how one previously operated or viewed things, then connect it with what has been taught in class and finally decide if the idea is worth adopting. The excerpts below were obtained for a five-minute reflective session.
Excerpt 1: 3 samples of students’ responses (extracted from the zoom recording, therefore, unsuitable wording and grammatical errors remain):

**Student A:** “Today I learned something about how to answer the invitation of a meeting; usually I don’t reply, or maybe just accept the invitation, but hmm... you talked to about to... we have to answer the invitation like you told us. Maybe this is a new experience for me to apply this new knowledge, just apply...if the invitation comes, I will just answer yes or no; maybe it’s a good point I have to take...”

**Student B:** “I learned new thing regarding on what exact condition I can use ‘future continuous’ previously I generally use ‘will’, ‘going to’ in explaining something in the future so I just knew that if something happen in the future and it’s a fixed plan, you’d better use future continuous instead of just simple future tense...”

**Student C:** “I kinda realize when I wrote an email in Bahasa I kind use the proper language before, but I also realize whenever I address email with foreign language, I use kinda language that is improper sometimes, I think that just a translation from Bahasa, so I might use some more specific things I learned from the previous weeks up until now, so can write better email in the future...I hope I can do it”

To give a clearer context, the topic for that day’s lesson was extending, accepting & declining invitations (see Table 1). From Excerpt 1, student A managed to answer the three questions. As s/he used ‘maybe’ in the statement, I can say that student A was unsure if s/he wanted to adopt the idea/target language taught in a class. Student A was referring to how to accept and decline an invitation, where it was discussed in class that there were numerous ways to respond to an invitation; instead of saying ‘yes,’ people can use other phrases like ‘that would be great,’ ‘that sounds like a plan,’ or instead of saying ‘no, I cannot,’ we can say ‘that sounds great. Unfortunately, I had another plan,’ or ‘I appreciate the offer, but I’m afraid I can’t’

While student A managed to cover the three questions, Student B indicated only covered two answers; s/he did not state whether s/he decided to adopt the idea from the lesson. However, s/he managed to recall how s/he used ‘will’ and ‘going to’ for everything that refers to the future. During the lesson we discussed some other forms of future tense besides ‘will’ or ‘to be going to’ as part of the grammar points covered in class. And apparently, some students were not familiar with ‘future continuous’ form, for example, ‘we will be having a meeting at that coffee shop tomorrow at 2 PM’ to indicate fixed plans in the future. So, they were delighted to learn something new that day.

On the other hand, Student C consciously or unconsciously did not mention what s/he has learned from the class, but s/he realized what s/he was not accurate with her/his writing in the past; Student C came to the realization that what he/she had been doing was simply a literal translation from Indonesian to English and that the outcome was improper. In the end, s/he used the word ‘might,’ which indicated that s/he was not sure if s/he wanted to adopt the new idea from the class into practice.

Even though not all the students managed to answer all three questions, they started to build that self-reflection awareness of what they learned after each class and decided to implement or disregard the lesson points. When I examined those three excerpts, I noticed that they each took different parts of the lessons covered, and they did not, deliberately, or unintentionally, repeat the same points their classmates had mentioned. It became an instrument or a helping tool for reviewing the lessons taught in class. I assumed that most of the students began to pay attention to the class material or they would be unable to speak during the reflection session. It took me three meetings/weeks to eventually get the students to respond to the three questions (see Appendix 2), so they started to say something about things they learned in the class. I suspected it was because they were not used to reflecting on what they had learned in class and took everything for granted, as my prior antecedent about the corporate students.

Excerpt 2: three samples of students’ email responses (extracted from the email students received, that is why typos, unsuitable wording, punctuations, capitalization, or grammatical errors remain.)
Student A:

Dear Duma,
In regards to your inquiry, hereby I wrote an email to fulfil the inquiry.
First, I wanted to apologize that I could not deliver the response on the previous week, due to my circumstances on a daily basis. So I humbly ask for your forgiveness for my mistake.
Regarding the “Five-Minute Reflective Session” that we have been doing for the past weeks. In my opinion, the session does affect my routine. In the past few weeks, I have learnt how to write properly, from using the right salutation, to being indirect, to apologizing and much more in the context. Recently, I always review what I need to write to other people, from a simple text to daily professional emails. In addition, the writing that I reviewed was not only on grammar and typos on the text, but also how the usage of the words would affect the person that interacts with me. Even better, sometimes I tried to reflect what I meant to say during everyday conversation. So in the future, I really hope that I would be able to apply the same in my daily conversation to other people which I do not know personally. In conclusion, the session does help me to be a better person.
Once again, I sincerely ask your forgiveness for my late response.
Regards,

Student A

Student B:

Dear Duma,
Apologies for this very late email.
I think the reflective session is effective, because we can hear other students' reflections and thoughts too about what they just have learned that day.
Thank you.
Regards,

Student B

Student C:

Dear Miss Duma,
The Five-Minute Reflective Session in the Pro-Skill Zoom Meeting helps me to:
1. know the common mistake I used to make in speaking English;
2. recall the subject matter I have learned from the class;
3. measure how far I have progressed in English; and
4. catch up with the things I have missed from the earlier class session, when I am late for the Pro-Skill Zoom Meeting.

Thank you, Miss Duma.

Regards,

Student C

From the email excerpts that I received from the students as feedback above, some points make me think that RP is worth promoting:
- Taking an excerpt from student A, he/she admitted that the RP affected him/her in a way that caused him/her to reevaluate his writing before hitting 'the send' button, and it was more than typos and grammatical errors; he/she began to see the bigger context in which different addressing needs requires different wordings to create a professional impression.
- Still, the excerpt from student A claimed that he/she also reexamined the tone and wording of his/her conversation. In short, s/he finds the five-minute reflective session beneficial.
- In the excerpt from student B, the student mentioned that s/he benefited from the five-minute reflective session because she could hear what other students reflected, thought, and learned from what they said.
- In the excerpt from student C, the student claimed that through the five-minute reflective session, s/he noticed the common mistake s/he used to make when speaking English, s/he also recalled the subject matter s/he has learned from the class and became the parameter of how far s/he has progressed in English.
Due to the work commitment, in the excerpt from student C, the student also stated that the five-minute reflective session helped her/him to catch up with the lessons s/he had missed from the earlier class session when s/he turned up late for the Pro-Skill class.

Those excerpts about somehow are in line with Philip’s (2006) idea where she outlined some of the advantages of direct RP amongst students, including:

- All students, not just the top performers, are encouraged to reflect.
- The reflection is clearly communicated to the students, allowing them to be aware of their reflective ability and the process being followed; this is critical if they are to transfer this skill.
- Reflection is assessed/measured alongside bigger desired learning results.
- Students may learn from their mistakes and improve their future learning by reflecting academically in a subject-specific manner as well as on employability. In other words, reflection includes not only skill development but also learning and understanding of the subject.
- Even students who perform poorly on a task are encouraged to learn from their mistakes and may receive extra points for their discoveries.

Answering the RQ: "To what extent would a Reflective Practice session bring the distinction between theory and practice in a pro-skills class to its participants?"

I can say that reflective practice benefits the participants more than just bringing the distinction between the theory and the practice in my pro-skills class. As stated in the preceding excerpt and aligned with Philip’s (2006) idea, the RP encourages all students to participate in the session, not just the top performers, and it somehow promotes ‘peer-tutoring’. The RP also comes across effectively to the students, allowing them to be aware of their reflective ability and the process that is being followed; this is critical if they are to transfer this skill. Exactly what Student A mentioned in Excerpt 2. Through RP students can gain insight from their mistakes and improve their future learning by reflecting academically and on job satisfaction in a subject-specific manner. In other words, reflection covers not only skill development but also subject comprehension and knowledge acquisition. Students can also start noticing mistakes they usually make and see how they have progressed so far. Lastly, the reflective session also helps latecomer students to catch up with the lessons they have missed earlier.

In line with the findings, Ogonor & Badmus (2006) conducted research in a Nigerian university’s teaching practice exercise in the years 2002–2003, the faculty of education adopted reflective teaching, which was the subject of the study. The sample for the study consisted of 354 students who were either in their final or preceding year of graduation. To guide the direction of the investigation, six research questions were posed. I just want to focus on their first research question, “What were student teachers’ perceptions of reflective teaching practice?” The findings of this study indicated that student teachers were delighted and had a chance to progress in their careers as they employed reflective teaching. Most student teachers reported that reflective teaching encouraged them to be intensely committed to achieving excellence. A large percentage of trainees stated that the practice forced them to reflect on and become acquainted with the school activities, which they had previously taken for granted. The exercise also allowed instructors to grasp the desired activities and experiment with new principles and teaching methods. They claimed that the process facilitated them to be more serious and devoted to their work compared to previous times when they were simply told that they did not perform up to expectation. In short, RP offers multiple benefits to the students who took part in the research as respondents.

4. Interpretation of the Reflection: A Teacher’s Reflection

This paper began as a curiosity to see whether it was feasible to boost the self-reflection of the linguistic aspects covered in class. Based on my empirical observations as an English teacher for a couple of years, some corporate students tend to be ignorant of the class and take all lessons for granted. My antecedent is supported by the finding stated by Ogonor & Badmus (2006), where the participants of the study were teacher students, and a large proportion of trainees confirmed that the RP pressured them to reflect on and become familiar with the life of the school, which they had initially taken for granted. Introducing the students to the RP might sound too ambitious for some people, and I realized it would be challenging to turn ‘inattentive’ students into active reflection practitioners. When I first introduced them to a five-minute reflection session, I did not get any response at all, and they did not seem excited about that. As I was determined to get them to participate in this session, I constantly set some examples and encouraged them to be more active and critical during the class. I finally got some responses in the third week, where I eventually got four responses (see appendix 2). As the weeks proceeded, the students’ enthusiasm gradually
increased towards this five-minute reflection session. Some of the students even asked me to keep the five-minute reflection session for the upcoming module they would have.

Reflection may be considered a challenging task to do. As an English teacher myself, with all the teaching materials prepared and ready to use, I was sometimes also tempted to take everything for granted. I kept teaching from one class to another without doing any reflection. Bassot (2016) argued that most people would learn from experience from time to time; some phrases, such as ‘that worked well’ or ‘I won’t do that again’ show that frequently (not always) people unconsciously take note of what happens around them and take action from it as a result. Taking this into account, it is understandable that once the students got the essential concept of reflection, they started to reevaluate things they have learned in class with their daily lives, and they were able to do it orally together with their classmates. Because I believe intuitively, they had learned from their experience far before I introduced them to the model reflection theory of ERA from Jasper (2013).

From this paper, I have learned the importance of understanding the concept theory of reflective practice; it goes beyond the sense of accomplishing the daily tasks the superiors instructed. Instinctively, we all have the nature of learning everything from our experiences that would determine our following actions in the future. But by acquiring this relatively simple RP by Jasper (2013), I gained a fresh viewpoint on how to reflect on my teaching materials and methods in class in order to improve my teaching skills as part of my professional development. I hope that the students involved in this mini research begin to develop a new perspective on what they have learned in class as part of their personal and professional development as well. In accordance with the findings of this study, Ogonor & Badmus (2006) also claimed in their investigation that student teachers were elated and had professional development opportunities as they practiced the RP. Additionally, Jasper (2013) also claimed that there are numerous goals people wish to accomplish by doing the RP, such as; escaping the routine practice, identifying how we learn best, demonstrating our competence to others, exploring alternative ways of solving problems, for personal and professional development, and many more purposes.

Prior to discovering this theory, I would randomly ask myself so many questions after doing something I wanted to reflect on, such as 'What did I just do?', 'Did it work effectively?', 'What made it work?', ‘Why did I do it that way?', ‘What other methods could I have possibly implemented?', ‘What do I have to do if I have to deal with the same situation again in the future?’. There were so many questions that it got overwhelming at times. But from now on, I will ask myself relatively simple questions every time I finish my class to reflect on the representation of the ERA reflection model:

- What teaching techniques/approaches did I apply in that class? How did they go? (Experience)
- What would I have done differently? (Reflection)
- What techniques/approaches will I adopt if/when I get this type of class again in the future? (Action)

Renard (2019) thinks that not all people are fond of writing, so the suggestion is simply to record the reflection on the smartphone and take some time after each lesson to briefly record what worked and what went wrong during the lesson. I will adopt that idea and also make sure to label the recording correctly so I can still use them afterward as my future references.

Osterman & Kottkamp (2004), as cited in Bassot (2016), argued the importance of connecting the line between learning and reflection; further, they stated, ‘While experience is the basis for learning, learning cannot take place without reflection.’ By examining the excerpt from the five-minute reflective practice and the written feedback from my students, I realized that doing this reflection needs to be done not only by the teachers but students, on the other end, also need to do it. As learning and reflections have a strong interconnection with each other.

5. CONCLUSION

This paper addressed the previously mentioned research question and concluded that the RP serves more than a pedagogical level in terms of what they learned from that day’s lesson and distinguishing how students performed in the real-life setting. Students argued that by using RP, they could learn from their mistakes and improve their future learning. The session also allowed them to do peer learning by allowing them to take what other students reflected on during the session. The RP also assists latecomer students in catching up on the lesson they missed earlier. Those findings are consistent with Philip’s (2006) concept of RP providing multiple benefits to practitioners.
Since the number of participants in this mini research was limited, it would be inadequate to generalize the benefits of implementing the RP in the business class. Further research on introducing the reflective practice to the students is still needed, with more participants, a longer period of doing the reflection, and complex data instrument analysis. However, based on the findings, I still recommend that teachers with a similar demographic class to this paper introduce the simple concept of the reflective model of ERA (Jasper, 2013) and invest some time before the lesson ends to do a reflection session with the students about the lesson points that have just been discussed.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1. The picture of a sample of an online pro-skills class with Net TV (the screenshot was taken during the class).
Appendix 2. The Net TV participants list (the screenshot was taken from WSE’s class attendance).

Appendix 3.
A mini journal on the three questions answered by students during five-minute reflective sessions.

1. **Week 1** (9 students attended): I began to introduce the basic concept of RP, but no one responded to those three questions.
2. **Week 2** (8 students attended): Still, no one responded when asked those questions; I assumed they still had no clue about the concept of reflective practice.
3. **Week 3** (8 students attended): Four participants shared the points they learned from the class.
4. **Week 4** (6 students attended): Three participants shared the points they have learned from the class.
5. **Week 5** (5 students attended, two students left the class early due to the other meeting they had to attend). No RP sessions: the class ended earlier as some students needed to attend emergency meetings.
6. **Week 6** (assessment day) No RP session
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