

Effectiveness of Reflective Teaching on Professional Development of English as Foreign Language (EFL) Teachers¹

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Abstract

This paper provides a systematic review of the current literature regarding the effectiveness of reflection on the professional development of English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers. To meet the needs of students in the modern educational system, instructors need to think about their professional development. Reflecting on the teaching process helps instructors to become better teachers because it allows them to recognize what is not going well in their classrooms and in which area students have problems. The purpose of this study is to review the significance of reflective practices in the professional development of EFL teachers. For doing this review, online scientific and updated databases such as ERIC, Google Scholar, and Academicjournals.org were searched. To find relevant articles, keywords such as "reflective teaching", "EFL teachers", "professional development", and "teacher efficacy" were searched. The article selection criteria were that the articles should be written in English, researched in Asian countries, and papers should have been published between 2009 and 2020, and related to the topic that was reviewed. After choosing 80 peer-reviewed articles, twenty-two articles that were mostly related to my research topic were studied. Twenty-two articles from 2009-2020 are included in this review which mostly discussed the effectiveness of reflective teaching on the professional development of EFL teachers. Many researchers supported the effectiveness of reflective teaching in the professional growth of EFL teachers through their research findings and the review of previous research.

Resumen

Este artículo proporciona una revisión sistemática de la literatura actual sobre la eficacia de la reflexión sobre el desarrollo profesional de los profesores de inglés como lengua extranjera (EFL). Para satisfacer las necesidades de los estudiantes en el sistema educativo moderno, los instructores deben pensar en su desarrollo profesional. Reflexionar sobre el proceso de enseñanza ayuda a los instructores a ser mejores docentes porque les permite reconocer lo que no va bien en sus aulas y en qué áreas los estudiantes tienen problemas. El propósito de este estudio es revisar la importancia de las prácticas reflexivas en el desarrollo profesional de los profesores de inglés como lengua extranjera. Para realizar esta revisión, se realizaron búsquedas en bases de datos científicas y actualizadas en línea, como ERIC, Google Scholar y Academicjournals.org. Para encontrar artículos relevantes, se buscaron palabras clave como "enseñanza reflexiva", "profesores de inglés como lengua extranjera", "desarrollo profesional" y "eficacia docente". Los criterios de selección de artículos fueron que los artículos debían estar escritos en inglés, investigados en países asiáticos, y los artículos debían haber sido publicados entre 2009 y 2020, y relacionados con el tema que se revisó. Después de elegir 80 artículos revisados por pares, se estudiaron veintidós artículos que en su mayoría estaban relacionados con mi tema de investigación. En esta revisión se incluyen veintidós artículos de 2009-2020 que discutieron principalmente la efectividad de la enseñanza reflexiva en el desarrollo profesional de los profesores de inglés como lengua extranjera. Muchos investigadores apoyaron la eficacia de la enseñanza reflexiva en el crecimiento profesional de los profesores de inglés como lengua extranjera a través de los resultados de sus investigaciones y la revisión de investigaciones anteriores.

Introduction

Reflective teaching is a process of teaching and teacher education that is founded on the idea that by critically reflecting on their own teaching experiences, teachers can enhance their understanding of teaching and the quality of their teaching (Xu, 2009). The process of reflective teaching requires instructors to think and consider the teaching process carefully for evaluating the issues being taught in order to find better ways for changing and improving the teaching process to get greater result. The process of reflective teaching such as peer-observation, self-reports, journal writing, and recording lessons can help teachers to develop professionally. According to Kheirzadeh and Sistani (2018), skilled educators frequently reflect on their teaching, aims, objectives, and methods, which can help to create a new world of education; therefore, enhancement of reflective practice can be a useful tool for improving self-awareness and pursuing new ways of teaching pupils.

Teaching as a difficult process needs qualified teachers. Teachers are seen as essential components of any educational system's success (Ashraf & Zolfaghari, 2018). To meet the needs of learners in the modern educational system, teachers need to think about their professional development. They have to do this by assessing their teaching practices. Reflecting on the teaching process helps instructors to become better

¹ This is a refereed article. Received: 2 August, 2021. Accepted: 6 Jun, 2022. Published: 28 July, 2023.

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teachers because it allows them to recognize what is not working well in their teaching process and in which area students have problems. In this regard, Artz et al. (as cited in Zahid & Khanam, 2019) stated that teachers have to reflect on the problems of learners, which probably occur during the achievement of targeted goals. Instructors should also think about the teaching strategies that they will need in delivering the lesson. As a result, reflective teaching can bring variety of changes in teachers' career. It provides them the opportunity to make the class stress free, make the learners autonomous because some of students are anxious and stressed during class activities, which decreases their class participation. It is clear that novice teachers have difficulties when they start teaching even as some teachers become disappointed. Reflective teaching is a method that can help them to find the weaknesses of their teaching process and promote their strengths. Furthermore, with the feedback that they receive from their peers and experienced teachers, they can bring changes in their teaching style and use new teaching methods. According to Tosriadi et al. (2018), for language teachers, reflective teaching is essential since it promotes teachers professional development. By reflecting on their actions, teachers can assess how well they did in the classroom. Thus, it inspires them to become qualified instructors.

The purpose of this systematic review is to present an overview of internationally published studies on the effectiveness of reflective practice on the professional development of EFL teachers in Asian countries. According to Lubis (2018), the concept of reflective teaching has encouraged researchers in Asia to share their research findings and evidence, regarding the importance of reflective teaching in EFL context. Some of the researchers found out the positive relationship between reflective teaching and instructors' performance such as (Afshar & Yar, 2019; Sanopo, 2016; Fatemipour & Hosseingholikhan, 2014), and teachers' perception on reflective practice in higher education institutions (Wahba, 2019). Reflective teaching is important because it helps teachers to become lifelong learners and bring positive changes in the teaching and learning process. This study can draw attention of teacher training institutions toward the significance of reflective teaching on the professional development of EFL teachers. Also, it may encourage researchers toward conducting further studies on developing reflective teaching in the EFL context. The following research question directed this study:

Are reflective teaching and professional development of EFL teachers related?

Method

Three different internationally well-known, online scientific databases (*ERIC, Google Scholar, and Academicjournals.org*) were searched in this study to collect related information from various journals. To find out related articles, keywords such as reflective teaching, EFL teachers, and professional development were searched. The articles were selected from peer-reviewed journals. Article selection criteria were that the articles should be written in English, be related to the topic that will be reviewed, were published between the years 2009 and 2020, and conducted in Asian countries. This period was selected after a review of Reform of Teacher Education in Asia – Pacific in the New Millennium: Trends and Challenges. On reviewing the aforementioned reform by Cheng et al. (2004), it was found out that many Asian countries were starting to reform their teacher education systems. For example, Lee (as cited in Cheng et al., 2004) conducted research in Malaysia and stated that a brief literature review on teacher education illustrates that there is a move from the technical model to the reflective practitioner model among developing Asian countries that reformed their teacher education systems, which, in turn, led to increased opportunities for reflective teaching. By applying the inclusion and exclusion criteria, articles that met the inclusion criteria were selected for further study and content analysis. Non-peer-reviewed articles that were published before 2007, and non-English language articles were omitted (see Table 1).

Criteria	Decision
The paper was published in a peer-reviewed journal.	Inclusion
The keywords were in the title or abstract section of the article.	Inclusion
The paper was written in the English language.	Inclusion
The research was conducted in Asian countries in an EFL context.	Inclusion
Research was conducted in non-Asian Countries regarding the effectiveness of reflective teaching on the professional development of language teachers.	Exclusion
The papers were non-peer reviewed.	Exclusion
The articles were published before 2007.	Exclusion

Table 1: The inclusion and exclusion criteria of selecting articles for the study.

Overall, the three databases produced a total number of 80 articles: 25 articles in *ERIC*, 35 in *Google Scholar*, and 20 in *Academicjournals.org*. At the screening stage, the titles of the papers were searched for the terms *reflective teaching*, *professional development*, and *EFL teachers*. Later, both the titles and the abstracts of the studies were analyzed to find those related to the effectiveness of reflective teaching on the professional development of EFL teachers. Finally, a total of twenty two articles on the effectiveness of reflective teaching on the professional development of EFL teachers were selected for this study (see Figure 1).



Figure 1: How articles were selected for the systematic review.

Results

Methods used in the reviewed studies

From a systematic review of 80 articles that were published between 2009 and 2020, only 22 studies met the inclusion criteria of this paper. From the twenty two articles, five were mixed method, in which two of them were conducted in Taiwan, and three of them were conducted in Iran. One was conducted based on definition research type in China. Nine papers were quantitative studies, of which seven were from Iran, one was from Pakistan and one was from Saudi Arabia. Six studies were qualitative studies, one conducted in Iran, one in Taiwan, one in Saudi Arabia, one in Turkey, one in Indonesia, and one in China. One research paper was based on the literature review method and was conducted in Indonesia (see Table 2).

Research Design	Frequency	Locations
Mixed	5	Taiwan and Iran
Quantitative	9	Iran, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan
Qualitative	6	Iran, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Taiwan, Indonesia, China
Definition	1	China
Literature Review	1	Indonesia

Table 2: The research design, frequency, and locations in the reviewed articles.

Participants of the reviewed studies

As can be seen in Table 3, sixteen of the articles included EFL instructors as their participants, three of them were involved EFL teachers and students as their participants, and two of them included only EFL students as their participants.

Participants	Frequency
EFL Teachers	16
EFL Teachers and students	3
EFL Students	2

Table 3: Participants included in the reviewed articles

Main Results

Table 4 presents the codes and categories developed through the systematic review of the literature. The codes represent the various themes that emerged from the analysis of the included studies, while categories provide an overarching framework for organizing and understanding these themes. The codes were developed through a process of thematic analysis, in which the data from each included study was examined. The codes were then reviewed and refined through a process of iterative coding, in which relationships between codes were identified and used to develop broader categories. The categories provide an in-depth understanding of the key themes that emerged from the literature.

Relationship between reflective teaching and the professional development of EFL teachers	
Reflective Teaching Code	Professional Development Category
Assist teachers	Curriculum autonomy Selecting, preparing, and sequencing of lessons Solving teaching problems
Opportunity	Identifying problem issues of classroom management Identifying abilities and weakness in teaching area
Reduce	Negative factors such as stress or anxiety
Facilitate	Meaningful conversation among teachers concerning teaching and learning
Allows	Teachers to be informed of their own experiences Teachers' self-efficacy
Improve	Giving feedback Assessment strategies
Audio recording and reflection in action	Teachers get full picture of their classes
Reflection documented peers and learners' feedback	Changed teaching priorities

Table 4: A short summary of the relationship between reflective teaching and the professional development of EFL teachers.

Importance of reflective teaching

In accordance with Lubis (2018), reflective teaching in EFL contexts, especially in Asia, has been encouraged and studied for about twenty-five years to discover the importance of the teachers' role as vital lifelong learners in and out of the classroom and to promote ongoing shared learning. In research carried out in Tehran and Karaj, Iran, Noormohammadi (2014) suggested that reflective teaching can assist teachers in the selection, preparation, and sequencing of lessons, as well as help them to gain curriculum autonomy. While practicing reflection, especially on important and students' elements, the instructor also has the opportunity to identify the problematic issues of classroom management and evaluate new methods while teaching. According to Xu (2009), reflective practice is a process of facilitating meaningful conversation and thought among teaching staff concerning teaching and learning, which leads to appropriate changes in curriculum and pedagogy. These judgmental methods can help us better comprehend what is going on in our classes and make modifications to teaching methods, evaluation, and instruction in an EFL setting. Language instructors should not act as inactive agents in the field. Rather, the instructors should take part in the process, so that they should think and reflect on their teaching to encourage their students to learn effectively. Xu (2009) added, "Reflective practice requires a commitment, a commitment towards change, towards understanding, and most importantly, a commitment towards continues self-development reflective teaching suggests that experience alone is insufficient for professional growth, but that experience together with reflection can be an effective path for EFL teacher's professional development" (p. 39). Fatemipour and Hosseingholi-Khani (2014) also agreed that reflective practice is a movement and critical thinking in teacher training that allows the instructors to be informed of their own experiences and evaluate their practice.

Impact of reflective teaching on professional development

After reviewing the twenty two articles from Asian countries in an EFL context regarding the effectiveness of reflective teaching on the professional development of EFL teachers, the results of the current study suggest that many researchers supported the effectiveness of this method on the professional development of EFL teachers.

According to Ur (as cited in Faghihi & Anani Sarab, 2016) professional development begins with the practice of reflecting on what is happening in everyday classroom activities. Li and Ye (2016) performed a case study on reflective teaching of EFL teachers in Leshan Normal University in China. The researchers declared that through reflective teaching, teachers solved their teaching problems and developed professionally. In addition, Tabassi et al. (2020) observed the EFL teachers' reflective teaching in private institutes of Mashhad, a city in north east of Iran. They pointed out that instructors who are engaged in self-reflective practices not only find solutions to specific issues, but they also to reduce negative factors, such as stress or anxiety, among students and themselves. Motallebzadeh et al. (2017) investigated to determine if peer-observation as a reflective tool would affect EFL teachers' professional development. The participants of

their study were 20 Iranian EFL teachers. Their research results revealed that peer observation as a reflective instrument could play an important role in the professional development of EFL teachers. Likewise, Yi Tien (2020) examined the effectiveness of reflective tools, such as lesson plans observation, peer-observation, peer-feedback, observation formatting, and self-reflection, among novice and experienced teachers in southern Taiwan. The participants were eighteen trainees and eight experienced EFL teachers. The research results revealed that both groups of teachers considered peer-observation and peer-feedback as useful reflective tools to their professional development.

Kheirzadeh and Sistani (2018) selected eighty-three EFL teachers from nine language institutes in Isfahan, Iran to study the effect of reflective teaching on Iranian EFL students. Their study revealed that instructors with greater experience and education are more pedagogical and critically reflective. Reflective teaching encourages meaningful conversation and thought among peers regarding teaching and learning, resulting in curriculum and pedagogical changes that are more effective. According to Ferdowsi and Afghari (2015), reflective teaching is an effective teaching process, in which instructors gather data from their classrooms and carefully observe their behavior and teaching techniques. Thus, instructors can assess themselves and identify their abilities and weakness in the teaching area, and become aware of the advantageous impact of reflective teaching on their careers. Their study in two language institutes in Esfahan, Iran, revealed that instructors who used reflective teaching in their classroom had better results of their teaching. They added that instructors should select the most suitable and convenient tools for performing reflective teaching based on their personality and needs. They suggested that audio-recording is a simple tool that any instructor can use regularly to get a full picture of his or her lesson.

In addition, Lan and Wang (2013) reported a case study in Taiwan on an intensive teacher training program. A total of 13 English instructors with different lengths of teaching experience participated in the program for three weeks. Participants presented their lessons and received constructive feedback from their peers and other experienced instructors. After numerous teaching cycles (e.g., teaching demonstration, peer-assessments, self-assessment, and reflection), most instructors indicated that the reflective teaching process was effective for improving their teaching and management skills, and the importance of reflection on the improvements of their teaching. Similarly, Fatemipour and HosseingholiKhani (2014) asserted that reflective teaching is a revolution in teacher education and a critical way of thinking that allows instructors to reflect on their own experiences and teaching. The main aim of their research was to find out the effect of reflective teaching on the EFL instructors' teaching process. Their study participants were 120 intermediate learners from Iran Oxford Language institute and ten language teachers from the same institute. The findings of their study indicated that the use of the reflective teaching method had a positive impact on instructors' performance and as a result of instructors' reflections documented in diaries, and learners' feedback, instructors made changes in their teaching priorities and considered alternative tasks to enhance their teaching effectiveness. Likewise, Fakazli (2017) conducted research in the Turkish context to investigate the perceptions of EFL university teachers toward using different reflection tools in their classes. Her study results inferred that if reflective teaching was carried out systematically it could help teachers to develop professionally. Shukri (2014) carried out research about female teachers' perception of reflective teaching as a teacher development tool in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. He asserted that teacher development is not the same as teacher education. Instructors after completing their education should improve their teaching skills. Teachers develop empowerment and understanding of their teaching competency and performance through reflection. Constructive feedback from peers, mentors, and learners has an important role in improving and helping instructors' professional development.

Instructors will make a greater contribution to their teaching area by presenting their understanding and knowledge, as they focus on their teaching activities methodically and critically. In doing so, everyone will better grasp the meaning of teaching and learning. Knowledge does not always have to come from a lab or textbook; it can come from different sources and can be created by the critical reflection of instructors. If instructors want to perform better and provide a better learning environment for their learners, they must grow professionally. Reflection-in-action activity can help teachers to have a real view of their class and their learners' performance. Teachers should use self-reflective teaching tools for their professional development when they do not have access to other professionals (Mermelstein, 2018).

Ashraf and Zolfaghari (2018) reported the relationship between Iranian EFL teachers' assessment literacy and their reflective teaching in different institutes of Mashhad, Iran. Their participants were 120 Iranian EFL teachers. After analyzing the data, they found out that there is a positive relationship between EFL teachers' reflective teaching and assessment literacy. Reflective teaching of instructors can be predicated by EFL

instructors' assessment literacy. Faghihi and Anani Sarab (2016) performed a survey on Iranian English Teachers' reflective practice in Iran. They argued that teachers should spend more time examining their learners' learning styles and critical features of the teaching in order to create optimal levels of pedagogic integrity.

Zahid and Khanam (2019) explored the effect of reflective practice on the performance of future instructors. They conducted their research in a Women's University's teacher education program in Lahore, Pakistan. Twenty learners were selected as the control group and 20 as the experimental group. The researchers trained the experimental group for one and a half months through several microteaching sessions. The findings showed that there were differences in appearance, lesson planning, communication skills, giving feedback, and assessment strategies of trained and untrained instructors. Their study supports the idea of previous research that reflective practice enhances teaching skills.

Relationship between reflective teaching and self-efficacy

Ahmad et al. (2017) stated that there is a direct association between teachers' self-efficacy and reflectiveness, which indicates that teachers' reflective teaching will undoubtedly increase their self-efficacy. In this regard, Nosratinia and Moradi (2017) selected 56 male and 138 female EFL teachers from two universities in Tehran, Iran, for their study. They asserted that if EFL instructors try to employ reflective teaching and use of motivation tactics, they can improve their self-efficacy. Besides, their study suggested that EFL instructors should enhance their awareness of reflective teaching and to be able to act as reflective teachers, they should be familiar with the ways of using reflective tools. Malmir and Mohammadi (2018) conducted research in Safir Language Institute in Tehran, Iran, to find out the relationship between Iranian EFL teachers' reflective teaching and their professional success to determine if reflective teaching and self-efficacy of Iranian EFL teachers would predict their academic achievement based on students' attitudes. They found out that both reflective teaching and self-efficacy could predict EFL instructors' professional performance. Babaei and Abednia (2016) also explored the relationships between reflective teaching and self-efficacy in the context of teaching EFL in Iran. The authors concluded that reflective teaching and self-efficacy have a positive relationship. That instructors' pedagogical competencies and knowledge and self-efficacy can be improved by reflection on second language teacher education and professional growth, that teacher-learners should be given the chance to experience mastery, witness their peers' accomplishments, obtain encouragement, and become enthusiastic and pleased with their progress and achievements and be encouraged and allowed to consider alternative, and even more useful ways of achieving what they and their peers want to accomplish, and positive feedback should be provided to assist their reflective thinking and help them to stay reflective in difficult situations.

Author(s) and Date	Method & Participants	Location	Key Findings
Fatemipour & HosseingholiKhani (2014)	Quantitative 120 female intermediate students and 10 EFL teachers	Iran	Reflective teaching method had a positive impact on instructors' performance. Moreover, the findings revealed that, as a result of instructors' reflections documented in diaries, and learners' feedback instructors brought changes in their teaching priorities and considered alternative tasks to enhance their teaching effectiveness.
Malmir & Mohammadi (2018)	Quantitative 28 (13 males & 15 females) teachers and 168 (78 males & 90 females) students	Iran	Both reflective teaching and self-efficacy can predict EFL instructors' professional performance.
Ashraf & Zolfaghari (2018)	Quantitative 120 teachers	Iran	There is a positive relationship between EFL teachers' reflective teaching and assessment literacy. Reflective teaching of instructors can be predicted by EFL instructors' assessment literacy.
Kheirzadeh & Sistani (2018)	Quantitative 83 male and female teachers	Iran	Instructors with greater experience and education are more pedagogical and critically reflective. Reflective teaching encourages meaningful conversation and thought among peers regarding teaching and learning, resulting in curriculum and pedagogical changes that are more effective.
Nosratinia & Moradi (2017)	Quantitative 194 teachers (56 males & 138 females)	Iran	If EFL instructors try to employ reflective teaching and use of motivation tactics, they can improve their self-efficacy. Besides, their study suggests that EFL instructors should enhance their awareness of reflective teaching, and, in order to be able to act as reflective teachers, they should be familiar with the ways of using reflective tools.
Noormohammadi (2014)	Quantitative 172 (68 males & 104 females) teachers	Iran	Reflective teaching can assist teachers in the selection, preparation, and sequencing of lessons, as well as helping them gain curriculum autonomy.
Babaei & Abednia (2016)	Quantitative 300 EFL teachers from 7 language schools	Iran	Argued that reflective teaching and self-efficacy have a positive relationship. Instructors' pedagogical competencies and knowledge and self-efficacy can be improved by reflection on second language teacher education and professional growth.
Ferdowsi & Afghari (2015)	Mixed method 5 EFL female teachers	Iran	Instructors who used reflective teaching in their classroom had better results of their teaching.

Faghihi & Anani Sarab (2016)	Mixed method 60 teachers	Iran	Argued that teachers should spend more time examining their learners' learning styles and critical features of the teaching in order to create optimal levels of pedagogic integrity.
Mermelstein (2018)	Mixed method 41 EFL students	Taiwan	Reflection-in-action activity can help teachers to have a real view of their class and their learners' performance. Teachers should use self-reflective teaching tools for their professional development when they do not have access to other professionals.
Lan & Wang (2013)	Mixed method 13 teachers (2 males & 11 females)	Taiwan	After numerous teaching cycles such as teaching demonstration, peer-assessments, self-assessment, and reflection most instructors indicated that the reflective teaching method was effective for improving their teaching and management skills, and the importance of reflect on on improvements of their teaching.
Tabassi et al. (2020)	Qualitative 10 EFL teachers (2 males & 8 females)	Iran	Instructors reflect not only to respond to an issue but also to reduce negative factors, such as stress or anxiety, in both students and themselves, as well as to improve and enhance something in teaching or learning.
Tosriadi et al. (2018)	Qualitative 4 female in-service EFL teachers	Indonesia	By reflecting on their actions, teachers can assess how well they did in the classroom. Thus, it inspires them to become qualified instructors.
Shukri (2014)	Qualitative 100 female teachers	Saudi Arabia	Constructive feedback from peers, mentors, and learners has an important role in improving and helping instructors' professional development.
Ahmad et al. (2017)	Quantitative 96 English Language Teachers	Saudi Arabia	There is a direct association between teachers' self-efficacy and reflectiveness, which indicates that teachers' reflective teaching will undoubtedly increase their self-efficacy.
Xu (2009)	Literature Review 11 Articles	China	Reflective practice requires a commitment, a commitment towards change, towards understanding, and most importantly, a commitment towards continues self-development. "Reflective teaching suggests that experience alone is insufficient for professional growth, but that experience together with reflection can be an effective path for EFL teacher's professional development" (p.39).
Lubis (2018)	Literature Review 104 Articles	Indonesia	Reflective teaching in EFL contexts, especially in Asia, has been encouraged and reviewed for about 25 years. The noteworthy aim emphasizes the importance of teachers' roles as vital lifelong learners in and out of the classroom to promote ongoing shared learning between them and their surroundings.
Zahid & Khanam (2019)	Quantitative 40 students	Pakistan	The findings showed that there were differences in appearance, lesson planning, communication skills, giving feedback, and assessment strategies of trained and untrained instructors. Their study supports the ideas of previous research that reflective practice enhances teaching skills.
Fakazli (2017)	Qualitative 8 EFL university teachers	Turkey	If reflective teaching is carried out systematically it helps teachers to develop professionally.
Motalebzadeh et al. (2017)	Mixed-method 20 EFL teachers in Iranian schools	Iran	Peer observation as a reflective instrument can play an important role in the professional development of EFL teachers.
Li & Ye (2016)	Qualitative 1 teacher	China	Through reflective teaching, teachers solve their teaching problems and develop professionally.
Yi Tien (2020)	Qualitative 18 novice and eight experienced teachers	Taiwan	Both novice and experienced teachers considered peer-observation and peer-feedback as a useful reflective tool to their professional development.

Table 5. The findings of reviewed studies on the effectiveness of reflective teaching on the professional development of EFL teachers.

Discussion

After going through the related literature, the findings revealed that there were similarities in ideas and research findings of most researchers that reflective teaching can help EFL teachers to develop professionally. They mostly pointed out that reflective teachers had better results in their teaching process. They also emphasized that reflective teaching enhances self-efficacy and pedagogical skills. Reflective teachers develop changes in attitudes and awareness that can benefit their professional growth as teachers, as well as they can support their students in the learning process.

According to Zahid and Khanam (2019), there are big differences among reflective and unreflective teachers' appearance, lesson planning, communication skills, ways of giving feedback, and assessment procedures. Shukri (2014) and Ferdowsi and Afghari (2015) indicated that teachers can improve their teaching competencies by reflecting on their teaching process. Besides, reflective teaching can help teachers to solve their teaching problems and decrease negative issues like stress and anxiety among learners and themselves, and improve the teaching and learning process (Li and Ye, 2016; Tabassi et al., 2020).

Researchers (Babaei & Abednia (2016), Fatemipour & Hosseingholikhan (2014), Lan & Wang (2013), Yi Tien (2020), Motalebzadeh et al. (2017), and Shukri (2014) stated that peer observation, and receiving constructive feedback from experienced teachers, peers, and learners can help teachers to reflect on their teaching process and develop professionally.

Conclusion

The importance of this paper is that it provides useful information for Asian educators to consider reflective teaching as an important practice that enables them to develop their professional identity and support language learners.

Overall, this review shows that reflective teaching is a process that teachers can use to observe and evaluate their behavior in the classrooms. Different approaches have been used by reflective teachers, such as observation of oneself and others, through writing, students' feedback, and group teaching. It can have been both a private process, or a process that teachers can discuss with their peers, mentors, and other experienced teachers. Through reflective teaching, teachers can collect information about what happened in their classroom and take time to analyze them and bring positive changes in their teaching process. The findings of this study may not be applicable all over the world in all EFL contexts because every society and each teacher has their own intentions and standards, as well as different cultural, economic and politic situations. For example, teachers cope with many challenges, such as low monthly income, teaching from old curricula, lack of teaching skills to teach effectively, and inappropriate teaching sittings. According to Afghanistan Resource Desk (Palan, 2012), in 2001, a team led by the Asian Development Bank completed Preliminary Needs Assessment (PNA) for the recovery and reconstruction of Afghanistan, they found out that about 80% of the school buildings have been demolished and only two teacher colleges operate countrywide. This team also has found out that teachers have not been paid for months and the curriculum has not been revised in 30 years. This is different from the contexts of other developing Asian countries where they have reformed their education system and focused on providing opportunities for reflective teaching.

By applying reflective teaching, teachers can cultivate changes in their attitude and awareness that can benefit their professional development as teachers. Besides helping teachers and students in the teaching and learning process, the results of this review can also improve teacher education through the introduction of reflective teaching which can help teachers to be critical thinkers and think about their own teaching process and teaching style, analyze the positive and negative part of their teaching and students' learning in order to bring changes in teaching methods, learners' behavior. All of the reviewed articles were concise and scientific. They suggested effective solutions and points for reflective teaching and professional development of EFL teachers giving teachers' new perspectives, new ways of reflecting on their own actions, and new awareness of their own behaviors to improve their teaching effectiveness. What the literature seems to remain lacking is that the researches took place only in a few developing Asian countries' schools and teacher training programs. Future studies should be conducted in more diverse EFL contexts in Asian countries regarding the abilities, strengths, and limitations in teaching process to help teachers to develop professionally.

In terms of limitations, the study is not exhaustive, as related studies may have been missed because of limited access to search databases. Future reviewers should include several studies to provide more information about the effectiveness of reflective teaching on the professional development of EFL teachers in Asian contexts and beyond.

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