

## Exploring the Use of Gibbs' Reflective Model in Enhancing In-Service ESL Teachers' Reflective Writing

**Siti Noor Aneeis Hashim**

Language Department, Institut Pendidikan Guru Kampus Perlis,

**Aizan Yaacob**

Universiti Utara Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur

**Ina Suryani**

Centre of Excellence for Unmanned Ariel Vehicle,  
Faculty of Business and Communication, Universiti Malaysia Perlis  
Corresponding Author: [inasuryani@unimap.edu.my](mailto:inasuryani@unimap.edu.my)

**Ratnawati Mohd Asraf**

Kuliyah of Education. International Islamic University Malaysia

**Zolkefli Bahador**

School of Education, Universiti Utara Malaysia

**Nadya Supian**

University Tunku Abdul Rahman

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### Abstract

While the importance of reflective writing is widely acknowledged worldwide, the lack of exposure to systematic reflective models to enhance reflexivity is a major concern among in-service teachers in many developing countries. This paper presents a qualitative case study that aimed to explore the elements reflected by a group of English as a Second Language in-service teachers through their reflective writing. Specifically, it explored how the in-service teachers wrote reflections before Gibb's reflective model was introduced to them as well as examined to what extent the systematic model managed to help them write better reflections. This study contributed to the body of knowledge on reflective writing among in-service teachers. Gibbs' reflective model was introduced as a systematic framework to guide their reflective writing for eight weeks. Multiple methods such as semi-structured interviews, reflection logs and field notes were collected and thematically analysed. The findings indicated that the teachers managed to write better reflections on their teaching after using the model. The teachers reported that Gibb's reflective model provided clearer guidelines for writing reflection, minimized difficulties in the evaluation and analysis of their teaching, and provided a space for thinking about their action plans. Gibbs's reflective model can be used as a tool to enhance ESL teachers' reflexivity and professional development.

**Keywords:** English as a second language, Gibbs reflective model, in-service teachers, primary school, reflective writing

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## Introduction

Both pre-service and in-service teachers not only need to be aware of the importance of reflection in their professional development, but they also require support in writing reflections. An absence of reflective models makes it difficult for them to write effectively. Reflective practice enables teachers not only to develop critical thinking skills but also to increase self-awareness in improving their teaching performance. Teachers who engage in reflective practice go through a cyclical process to relook, rethink, relearn and reanalyze their teaching experiences which will eventually enhance their practices. It is one of the major determinants of teaching success as it helps the teachers to collect, record, and analyze everything that happened in their teaching processes. Reflection also enables them to move from just experiencing, into understanding by reflecting on the experiences that they went through. The reflective process activates the teachers' thinking as they question what their experiences mean to them.

While the positive impact of reflective writing could be seen in promoting metacognitive awareness and critical thinking, lack of exposure to systematic reflection models to rely on, makes it difficult for teachers particularly in developing countries, to become critical in their reflections (Zaretsky et al., 2022; Kilic, 2022). Teachers need to use a suitable reflective model to help them to think critically, thus improving their teaching. Furthermore, the use of reflective models during reflection processes before, while and after teaching enables the teachers to increase their reflexivity (Rico et al., 2012; Yaacob et al., 2021). Therefore, the use of a reflective thinking model during the reflective journal writing process is essential to provide a better impact on teaching and learning.

In Malaysia, reflective writing has been added to the Malaysian teacher training programs when clinical supervision was implemented in 1989. Later, in 1999, the Malaysian Ministry of Education made reflective writing compulsory for all in-service teachers to write their reflections in their lesson plans whereby they are expected to reflect on what they have achieved during their teaching based on the learning objectives (MoE, 1999). Since then, reflective writing becomes a routine activity for teachers. Consequently, the Malaysian Education Quality Standard or known as "*Standard Kualiti Pendidikan Malaysia Gelombang 2* (MoE, 2017) was implemented to upgrade the teaching quality of Malaysian teachers. Therefore, these documents show the Ministry's awareness of the importance of reflective writing skills to be inculcated among teachers. It has become one of the major determinants of teaching success (MoE, 2019).

While efforts have been made by the Ministry of Education to improve teachers' reflectivity, teachers are still unable to reflect critically (Kim, 2018; Min et al., 2017; Mohd Sharif & Zainuddin, 2017; Wan Hassan & Mohd Yusoff, 2019; Yaacob et al., 2014). In addition, there seems to be little research on the use of reflective models among in-service English language teachers to enhance self-efficacy. These past studies mainly concentrated on pre-service teachers as compared to in-service teachers (Chiew, Dali & Lim, 2016; Choy, Yim & Tan, 2017; Choy, Yim & Sedhu, 2019; Kabilan, 2007; Yaacob et al., 2014). On that note, this study was conducted to explore to what extent Gibb's reflective model was useful in improving English as a Second Language (ESL) in-service teachers' reflective writing.

1. To explore the nature of reflective writing produced by in-service teachers.
2. To examine the extent to which Gibbs' reflective model is useful in improving ESL teachers' reflective writing.

The findings will contribute to the body of knowledge on in-service teachers' reflective writing in English as a second language context. We begin the paper with the literature review

which provides related studies on reflective writing and the use of Gibbs' reflective model, followed by the methodology section which details the study design, sampling, methods, procedures, and analysis. Then, we present the results and discussion before it ends with the conclusion of the study.

## Literature Review

### *Related Studies on Reflective Journal Writing*

A successful reflective process enables the teachers to learn through and from experience towards gaining new insights into their own practice. This new insight enables teachers to make changes and improvements in their instructions (Medic, 2022; Pasternak & Rigoni, 2015). However, it has been argued that without reflective writing, teachers could not focus on the main themes in their reflections, unable to record and analyze events in a prescribed manner to foster reflective thinking (Shandomo, 2010). As a result, they could not manage their teaching pedagogy and transform theory into practice (Mohammadi et al., 2020; Rousseau, 2015).

For that reason, reflective writing becomes an important tool in helping teachers to collect, record, and analyse everything that happened in their teaching process (Yoshihara, Kurata, & Yamauchi, 2020). Teachers need to use their reflective writing as a means of reflective practice for professional development (Richter et.al., 2022) which enables them to move from just experiencing, to understanding by reflecting on the experiences they went through (Farrell & Kennedy, 2019; Maarof, 2007). Hence, reflective writing plays an important role for teachers to reflect on and understand their experiences in teaching (Fraser et.al., 2022; Göker, 2016). In other words, it allows the teachers to learn from reflecting on their daily experiences by asking questions related to how, why, and what of their teaching and learning process, and recording their thoughts in reflective writing (Maarof, 2007).

Reflective writing has now become popular in second language teaching due to its contribution to educational development and instruction by facilitating teachers on both self-reflection and integration of theory and practice (Quirke et al., 2020). Quirke et al. also highlighted that the teachers will be able to build their capacity to function as leaders by reviewing the theories behind reflective writing and reflective inquiry which enable them to develop their professionalism and leadership.

Despite the importance of reflective writing in teacher education, its implementation among teachers faced exertion (Dinham et al., 2020). Dinham et al. (2020) argued that the environment at schools inhibits teachers to practice reflection. In the context of Malaysia, the teachers were not well acquainted with the idea of reflective practitioner which was adapted from Australia. Teachers perceived they had no time for reflection, received a lack of feedback on the quality of their work, and were discouraged by the guidelines to practice reflective writing (Senom et al., 2013). Consequently, they lacked practice to exercise professional knowledge and to use professional resources i.e. reflective writing to increase their professionalism (Rahimi & Weisi, 2018). Furthermore, Krutka and Carpenter (2016) claimed that even though many experienced teachers are always thinking about their teaching, they still prefer speaking to colleagues about critical incidents rather than writing in their reflection logs (Bruster & Peterson, 2013) as it was less practiced in their work culture (Rigg & Trehan, 2004; Trehan & Rigg, 2008; Fox, Dodman & Holincheck, 2019). Besides, teachers and policymakers understand reflection differently and this has caused major concern among educators in Malaysia (Saric & Steh, 2017).

Likewise, Leijen et al. (2014) revealed that the teachers who are not actively engaged in reflective writing did not use any suitable reflection model to write reflections and to reflect on the critical incidents that happened during and after the lesson was conducted. As such, they were unable to apply a more systematic process of collecting, recording and analysing their thoughts and observations, as well as those of their students. Besides, teachers with less practice in reflective writing were unable to go through the reflective cyclical process systematically (Helyer, 2015; Cirocki & Widodo, 2019; Ahmed, 2020) and thus, failed to reflect critically in building a robust, motivated and progressive professional personality (Jennifer & Mbato, 2020). They missed out on essential elements of reflections as they could not focus on the main themes in their reflective writing, and were unable to record and analyze events in a prescribed manner to foster reflective thinking (Mohammadi et al., 2020; Rousseau, 2015; Shandomo, 2010). Similarly, Smith and Martin (2014) claimed that teachers with less reflective skills will struggle in "being professional" as professionalism is strongly associated with reflection and lifelong learning.

In a similar vein, a lack of practice in reflective writing is also associated with a lack of guidance on how to write a good piece of reflective writing (Farrell & Kennedy, 2019; Yaacob et al., 2014; Miller, 2020). In some instances, teachers only described the incidents that happened in the classroom without critically analyzing their own teaching instructions (Ahmed, 2020; Maat & Zakaria, 2010). Therefore, a lack of reflective writing practices may lead teachers to become stagnant and less creative in their teaching (Jones, Rivera & Rooij, 2020). In other studies, similar findings show that teachers mostly reflected at technical and practical levels of thinking, but rarely rose to the critical level of reflection (Min et al., 2017; Ong et al., 2020; Yaacob et al., 2014). The teachers mostly focused on their classroom experiences as opposed to being deep thinkers (Chien, 2013).

While there are many existing models used in the literature, Gibbs' reflective cycle is widely used for educational purposes (Adeani et al., 2020; Cooper & Wieckowski, 2017; Fathelrahman, 2019; Impedovo & Malik, 2016; Rolfe et al. 2011; Nguyen et al., 2020) as it provides well-structured guidelines that enable the teachers to write better reflective writing compared to other models of reflective writing (Adeani et al., 2020; Heyer, 2015). Previous studies claim that teachers could be guided on how to reflect and rethink their teaching through reflective practice and using reflective tools, models or frameworks (Ahmed, 2020; Benade, 2015; Impedovo & Malik, 2016). Reflective tools, models or frameworks help teachers to voice out their evaluation, responses and feelings to a particular problem they are facing in the classroom (Sert, 2019). This is supported by Korucu et al., (2019) and Yoshihara et al., (2020) who postulated that reflective tools, models or frameworks could support teachers to begin the process of reflective writing based on their critical episodes and critical phases they go through in their classrooms. Kallarackal and Thomas (2020) also stated that a structured reflective framework is needed to facilitate the teachers to do self-reflection which will encourage them to become more conscious of their acts and effects, strengths and of their practices. Hence, it allows them ample time to reflect and write their reflection based on the learning outcomes and evidence of the strengths and weaknesses of their own teaching (Ahmad et al. 2021; Canaran & Mirici, 2020; Vandermeulen, Leijten, & Van Waes, 2020).

Wass and Rogers (2019) claimed that it is vital to provide teachers with ample time to write their reflection logs and sustain their reflective practice with peer observation and video. Peer evaluation will help them to select significant teaching and learning approaches, increase their envision to apply what they had learnt from the previous reflection in future situations, commit

themselves to do an action plan and consciously modify their teaching styles and students' behaviour (Cirocki & Farrell, 2019; Alemi & Tajeddin, 2020). Therefore, taking into consideration the need to train teachers with a systematic reflective model, this paper presents the findings from a case study which explored a group of ESL in-service teachers' reflective writing. We argue that reflective journal writing using Gibbs' Model could enhance these teachers' reflectivity and improve their journal writing over time.

### ***Gibbs' Reflective Model***

This study adopted Gibbs' Reflective Model (1988) to guide the teachers in their reflective writing as it offers a well-structured framework to facilitate reflective writing. Table one shows Gibb's Reflective model which guided this study.

Table 1. *Gibb's (1988) six stages of the reflective model*

1. Description: What happened?	What, where and when? Who did what? What did you do/read/see/hear? In what order did things happen? What were the circumstances? What were you responsible for?
2. Feelings: How did you feel?	What was your initial gut reaction, and what does this tell you? Did your feelings change? What were you thinking?
3. Evaluation: What was good or bad about the experience?	What pleased, interested or was important to you? what made you unhappy? what difficulties were there? who/what was unhelpful? Why? What needs improvement?
4. Analysis: What sense can you make of the situation?	Compare theory and practice. What similarities or differences are there between this experience and other experiences? Think about what actually happened. What choices did you make and what effect did they have?
5. Conclusion: What else could you have done?	What have you learnt for the future? what else could you have done?
6. Action Plan: What will you do next time?	If a similar situation arose again, what would you do?

Table one indicates the components of description, feelings, evaluation, analysis, conclusion, and action plan. It offers a framework for the teachers not only to examine experiences of cyclic nature but also to allow them to learn and plan their future actions based on the weaknesses and strengths they found in the previous lesson (Heyer, 2015). In other words, the guided questions help the teachers to explore their teaching experiences deeply.

### **Methods**

A qualitative case study approach by Yin (2014) was used as it provides a unique example of real people in a real situation and it offers a multi-perspectives analysis in which the researcher considers not just the voices and perspectives of the participants, but also the views of others and the interactions between them (Cohen & Manion, 2000; Nieuwenhuis, 2010). One of the researchers was the 'research instrument' or the participant whereby who was fully engaged with the teachers and established a good rapport with them. She was their district trainer in the English Language. Therefore, the data were reported based on a natural setting from an 'emic' perspective (Yin, 2008).

### ***Participants***

The study involved six in-service teachers (three females and three males) who were teaching in one primary school in one of the districts in the northern state of Malaysia in 2020. The teachers had between 19 and 32 years of experience in teaching English as a second language.



They were selected based on purposive sampling (Cohen & Manion, 2000). Table two shows the profile of the participants in the study.

Table 2. *Profile of the participants*

Name	Gender	Teaching experience	Reflective writing
Teacher Amri	Male	21	After teaching
Teacher Anuar	Male	28	After teaching
Teacher Nazmi	Male	31	After teaching
Teacher Ira	Female	19	After teaching
Teacher Vina	Female	25	After teaching
Teacher Zila	Female	32	After teaching

As indicated in Table two, all of the teachers indicated that they write reflections after the lesson and they have a good reflective ability and are willing to share their experiences and professional opinions about their teaching practices. Because of ethical considerations (Creswell, 2013), the teachers were given an informed consent form to sign and were enlightened about their rights to withdraw from the study. Pseudonyms were applied to protect the confidentiality of the participants.

### ***Research Instruments***

Multiple data collection methods such as semi-structured interviews, reflective journals and field notes were employed in this study. The following section details the methods used.

#### *Semi-structured Interviews*

According to Merriam (2009), semi-structured interviews were conducted with the teachers twice, at the beginning of the study to examine the problems they had with writing reflection and at the end of the study after Gibb's reflective Model was introduced to explore the extent in which the model used enhanced their reflective writing practices. The interview protocols were adapted from Leijen, et al., (2014). The interviews were conducted after the class time based on the teachers' convenience and lasted between 30 minutes to one hour. The teachers' views, ideas and feelings concerning the issue of reflective writing were recorded and analysed. This interview protocol was piloted with one English teacher from a different school in the same district. Some modifications were made to the instrument upon discussion with an expert in assessment (Lu & Gatua, 2014) before it was used with the group of teachers in the main study.

#### *Field Notes*

Field notes were used to produce meaning and understanding of the situation. The participants' feelings, as well as behaviours, activities, events and other features of the setting, were also recorded. The field notes were written immediately after the site visits and the interview sessions. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), these notes form an audit trail of details about how the researcher conducted the inquiry to establish the confirmability of a research finding which involves establishing that the findings are based on participants' responses instead of the researcher's own preconceptions and biases. These are detailed and accurate descriptions of what the inquirer sees, hears, and experiences (Creswell, 2013). Field notes were used to support the findings from reflective journals and interviews.

### *Reflective Journal*

Throughout this study, the teachers were asked to write their post-lesson reflections for four weeks. Twelve reflections were collected (two from each participant) and analysed before and after the intervention to see the patterns of reflective writing. Researchers then analysed and reflected on the nature of the reflections written by the teachers (Creswell, 2013). Lesson plans were also collected to examine their reflections prior to the training.

### *Research Procedures*

There were four phases in the data collection procedures in this case study: First, gaining access and conducting the first interview; second, training how to use Gibb's reflective model; third, writing post-reflections and conducting the second interview, and finally, analysing the qualitative data. Gaining access into the field was conducted in Phase One whereby a meeting with the teachers was conducted to enable the researcher to provide a briefing on the research purpose as well as to obtain consent from the participants. During this phase, interviews were also conducted to identify the problems in writing reflections. The interview lasted between half an hour to one hour in each session and they were recorded and transcribed verbatim for analysis. Simultaneously, lesson plans were also collected to examine the elements reflected in their reflective writing.

In Phase Two, training on how to use Gibbs' reflective cycle was conducted for three weeks to familiarize them with the framework and the debriefing questions. The training session enabled the teachers to practice writing reflections using Gibb's model and guided questions. Next, in Phase Three, the teachers were asked to write their post-lesson reflections individually based on Gibb's reflective model and guided by the researcher. This reflective writing session provided a chance for the teachers to have a better understanding of their thinking process. In this phase, a second interview was conducted to find out the effectiveness of Gibb's model in helping the teachers to write their reflections. Finally in Phase Four, a reiteration process with the participants which involved getting clear information, to avoid the researcher's bias was conducted. Here, the verbatim interview transcriptions were shared with the participants and they were allowed to explain further what they meant from the interview transcripts.

### *Data Analysis*

Thematic analysis was conducted on all the qualitative data collected in this study. The thematic analysis involved transcribing, reading and familiarizing, coding across the entire data set, searching for themes, reviewing themes and subthemes, defining and naming themes and finalizing analysis. as proposed by Braun and Clarke (2013). The reason for adopting thematic analysis was because it gives flexibility to the researchers and it works effectively in capturing key ideas from the transcription. Before arriving at the distinctive themes, the researchers repeatedly read the transcriptions a few times and recognized primary ideas while the codes were being generated. After this laborious procedure, the primary themes were identified by organizing the codes. The themes obtained from the interview data were presented to two experts for their expert opinion and approval of the terms used for the themes. The themes were then reviewed again before the final themes were established.

### *Trustworthiness*

Being aware of many ethical issues in qualitative inquiry, the researchers carefully discussed the issue of confidentiality and the right to withdraw from this research with the participants at the initial stage of this study (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Researchers also protected the anonymity of the participants by assigning pseudonyms to their names and explaining to them the purpose of this case study was to improve their reflective writing and that the data would only be used for research purposes. In addition, inter-rater reliability was conducted to ensure reliability and validity by comparing and checking the coding made by two experts in the field (Braun & Clarke, 2013).

### *Triangulation*

Triangulation was verified via methods of data collection (Denzin & Lincoln, 2017; Merriam, 2009; Patton, 2002) which were interviews, reflective journals, and field notes. All the interviews were recorded and the transcribed interviews were brought back to the participants to be checked or known as 'member checking' (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 2009; Patton, 2002) and the content was verified to avoid misunderstanding and researcher bias.

### **Findings**

The findings are presented in two parts. In the first part, it reveals the nature of the teachers' reflections before the training, and in the second part, it depicts how the model helped in improving their reflections. The data were obtained from interviews and reflections. It is also supported by an extract taken from one teacher, named "Teacher Nazmi" to illustrate his improvement in reflective writing.

#### ***The Nature of Reflective Writing Produced by In-service Teacher Before the Training***

When asked in the interview when they wrote their reflection, the majority of them mentioned that they wrote it after each lesson during their free time. Teacher Anuar mentioned that he wrote his reflection in the spaces provided in the lesson plan, while Teacher Ira stated that she wrote it after every lesson while waiting for her next class.

"Everybody writes a reflection after teaching in the space provided in the lesson plan" (Teacher Anuar, Interview)

"Normally, I write the outcome of the lesson after teaching" (Teacher Vina, Interview)

"I do it every day after the lesson and during free time while waiting to get into the next class" (Teacher Ira, Interview)

These teachers also indicated that reflection after teaching allowed them to look back on their teaching and learning sessions. They asked questions about their lesson on what worked, and what did not work. Their reflections enabled them to record their strengths and weakness. The teachers said,

"Reflection is good for me as I could recheck the weaknesses of my instructions" (Teacher Nazmi, Interview)

"It is a time for me to do self-evaluation and check on the strengths and weaknesses of my instructions, especially between what I was planned and what actually occurred during my instructions as I noted at the end of the lesson" (Teacher Anuar, Interview)

Interestingly, one of the teachers mentioned that she focused on students' achievement because it was required by the inspectorate who visited the school.



“I just write the amount of the students as required by the inspectorate to write a brief statement indicating the extent a learning objective has been achieved every time after teaching” (Teacher Vina, Interview)

Similar findings were found in the teachers' reflective journals. Teachers' reflective journals were analysed using Gibbs' reflective model to explore the elements reflected in their reflections. The findings indicated that these teachers did not reflect based on the six elements of Gibbs' reflective model. Table three shows the nature of the reflections produced by the teachers.

Table 3. *The nature of reflections produced by the teachers*

Nature of reflection before using Gibb's reflective model	Participants
“28/30 pupils achieved the objectives. 2/30 of the pupils need more exercises and guidance”	Teacher Amri, Reflection log
“18 pupils matched the sentences accurately”	Teacher Nazmi, Reflection log
“25/32 pupils achieved the objectives. 7/32 of the pupils need more exercises and guidance in the next lesson”	Teacher Zila, Reflection log
“65% pupils achieved the objectives. 25% of the pupils need more exercises and guidance in future lesson”	Teacher Ira, Reflection log

As shown in Table three, the teachers' reflections were very brief indicating only the analysis as to whether the lesson objectives have been achieved by stating the numbers of the students who answered the questions correctly. For example, Teacher Nazmi wrote, “18 pupils matched the sentences accurately”, while Teacher Zila mentioned, “25/32 pupils achieved the objectives. 7/32 of the pupils need more exercises and guidance in the next lesson”. There were no elements of description, feelings, evaluation, conclusion and future action plan. The focus of their reflections was mainly on the student's achievement.

In summary, the findings indicated that even though they were aware of the benefits of writing reflections for their teaching and learning, they were briefly written and focused solely on students' achievement without reflecting on their instructions.

### ***Impact of Gibb's Reflective Model on In-service Teachers' Reflective Writing***

The second part of the paper examines to what extent Gibb's reflective model helped in improving the teachers' reflective writing. The data were obtained from reflective journals and interviews. The teachers' interviews indicated a few themes: The model provided them with reflective writing guidelines; it reduced difficulties in analysing and evaluating teaching events; and it was useful for self-improvement.

### ***Reflective Writing Guidelines***

The teachers mentioned that Gibbs' reflective model was useful in helping them to reflect and to write critically. The model became their reflective writing guidelines and was used as a tool for meaningful reflective writing. Teacher Zila mentioned that it helped her during the process of reflecting. Meanwhile, Teacher Vina stated that she could think and reflect better. Hence, the teachers were able to write their reflections using suitable reflective statements.

“The guided questions brighten up the way to do reflection and it promotes the process to reflect.” (Teacher Zila, interview)

“Teachers need to have clear guidelines to guide us to think and reflect better. It seems similar to the things that the administration asks about what are the interventions we did to increase students' achievement. Now I realised that the correct way to do reflection is one of the ways to help me think and come out with the best intervention for my students” (Teacher Vina, Interview)

### ***Reduced Difficulties in Analysing and Evaluating Teaching Events***

The model also helped them to lessen their difficulties in analysing and evaluating their teaching. Teacher Anuar and Teacher Nazmi indicated that they were confused with all the terminology used, however, the training helped to minimize their confusion.

“I'm confused on evaluation, analysis and conclusion stages as they seem repeating the same things but it becomes clearer after the guidance and explanation...” (Teacher Anuar, interview)

“I was confused at first as the questions seemed similar yet have different needs. But I realized and agreed that they are connected. We need to go ahead... although we have a lot of work and activities to do.” (Teacher Nazmi, interview)

### ***Self-improvement***

Guided reflective writing helps to change their reflection to a more critical reflection. Through a series of reflection activities, the teachers managed to improve their ability to write a meaningful reflection and they showed positive intention to improve their teaching in future lessons. Teacher Nazmi mentioned that the questions helped him to reflect on his experiences, while Teacher Zila lamented that it increased her self-awareness of her strengths and weaknesses. On the other hand, Teacher Nazmi, Teacher Zila and Teacher Anuar stated that the reflective guidelines helped them to plan for future actions.

“The opportunity to use the questions, the template and your explanation helped me to flashback and learn from the experience. It makes me clearer on my next action to be taken.” (Teacher Nazmi, interview)

“It helps me to do self-improvement and increase self-awareness especially to identify the strengths and weaknesses and taking action to address them ... it helped me to be more reflective and could think critically for better instructions” (Teacher Zila, interview)

“It's good to try out to do better on the next lesson based on the previous experiences... the guided questions helped me to explore different/new ideas and approaches towards doing or thinking about my lesson to plan and choose relevant teaching strategies and materials to plan my future teaching...” (Teacher Anuar, interview)

The positive impact of Gibbs' reflective model is also evident in the participants' reflective journal writing. (Refer to Appendix 1: Teacher Nazmi's reflection.

As can be seen in the extract, Teacher Nazmi was able to describe the lesson and to make the analysis as to how many students performed the task successfully when he wrote, “20 pupils read the passage correctly but the rest 8 pupils still did not know what to do. The advanced pupils carried out the task successfully compared to the others”. He also managed to express his feelings when he said, “I was satisfied. Satisfaction on what had happened in the classroom” and he was aware of his students' enjoyment of the lesson, “Pupils enjoyed the lesson but sometimes they seem really confused and did not know what to do”. Interestingly, he was aware of the students' problems, such as having “*lack vocabulary*” and that peer learning was useful for them. Most importantly, he reflected on the actions to be taken in his future classes. He wanted “to prepare a well-planned

lesson and to prepare the teaching aids and materials for the students". In addition, he said, "I plan to choose the PBL approach and recycle materials based on their interest, knowledge, surrounding and family background to prepare the next lesson." This shows evidence that the guided model provided an opportunity for him to reflect based on his experiences. He was able to describe, analyze, evaluate and most importantly think of action plans for his future lessons. In sum, the participants suggested the introspective questions used during the intervention session helped them to reflect on their daily practices and to think critically. They managed to organize their thoughts to include elements of description, feelings, evaluation, analysis, conclusion and action plan.

## Discussion

The study was set to explore how the in-service teachers write reflections before Gibb's reflective model was introduced as well as to examine to what extent the systematic model managed to help them write better reflections. Our findings indicated that the in-service teachers in this study were not actively engaged in reflective writing at the beginning of the study as they were not exposed to any model to refer to. Their reflections focused mainly on the student's achievement. When mapped against Gibbs' Reflective Model, there were no clear elements of description, feelings, evaluation, conclusion, and future action plan. Our findings have also shown that, even though most of them were aware of the benefits of writing reflections for their teaching and learning, they missed other essential components of reflections such as feelings, evaluation, and action plans. This is consistent with the study conducted by Leijen et al. (2014) and Yaacob et al. (2014) which indicated that the participants were not using a suitable reflection model to practice reflective teaching. Although the teachers were making changes in their teaching, the changes made were based on what they believed they should do rather than based on what they should reflect on and plan the new actions.

In relation to the second research question which was to examine the extent to which Gibbs' reflective model was useful in improving the ESL teachers' reflective writing, our findings demonstrated that even though their reflections were not critical enough at the beginning, the introspecting questions, guidance, and corrective feedback provided, helped them to write better reflections. The teachers mentioned in the interview that the model did not only provide them with reflective writing guidelines, but it also minimized their difficulties in analysing and evaluating their teaching events. Furthermore, they claimed that it was useful for self-improvement. One of the teachers mentioned that with this guide, he was able to reflect based on his past teaching experiences. He was capable of describing the event, analyzing and evaluating his students' learning, as well as thinking about action plans for his future lessons. He acknowledged that he was aware of his learners' needs and capabilities based on the model taught. Our findings indicated that the teachers have a good capability and competence to explore different ideas and approaches towards doing and thinking critically to solve the critical incidents (Ahmed, 2020; Cirocki & Widodo, 2019; Kilic, 2022; Zarestsky et al., 2022).

Undoubtedly, Gibb's model helped these teachers to reflect and increase their reflexivity by identifying their strengths and weaknesses and thus, coming up with action plans to address them. The process of reflecting on their lessons also enabled them to link practice with theory by combining teaching with theoretical knowledge rather than ignoring it without reflecting and acting upon it. Our findings are following many scholars who view the need for a reflection model or framework to be used during the reflective writing process (Leijen et al., 2014; Cirocki & Farrell, 2019; Alemi & Tajeddin, 2020). The findings are also in line with many studies that looked

at the positive impacts of reflective writing on teacher education (Slade et al., 2019; Yaacob et al., 2021). Despite the positive impacts discovered in the teachers' reflective writings, the duration of the study which took place for one month appeared to be limited in the sense that they needed more time to develop the reflective writing skills. We recommended that a more longitudinal study be conducted to ensure they become reflective practitioners.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, it is important to pay attention to the in-service teachers' voices which focused on their perspectives and their commitment to improving their practices. Providing opportunities for them to reflect on their practices, and demonstrate that they are learning to make connections between theory and practice in a way that increases the potential for their learning. Here, the teachers search for personal meanings and emotions by focusing on their own thoughts, feelings, behaviours, and evaluations. Teachers need to be taught that different models are appropriate for different contexts and they need to be used selectively and judiciously. We have provided evidence that Gibbs' reflective cycle can help the in-service teachers to practice both writing and thinking through reflective writing and inspire them to develop their way of thinking, improve their pedagogical skills, have a better understanding of their pedagogical content knowledge and ultimately, review their teaching progress. Finally, we recommend Gibbs' reflection model to be used as a framework for both pre-service and in-service teachers to learn more from reflecting on their experiences and to endure themselves in devoting reflective practice.

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### About the Authors:

**Siti Noor Aneeis Hashim** is a Lecturer Language Department, Institut Pendidikan Guru Kampus Perlis. She lectures in curriculum and instructions. Her research interest includes reflective writing, in-service teachers, primary school and English for Second Language.  
ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9474-2122>

**Aizan Yaacob** is an Associate Professor at UUM Kuala Lumpur. She delivers lecture in English Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics. Her areas of specialization include ELT, Applied Linguistics, Bilingualism, and qualitative research. She is currently the Editor-in-Chief for Practitioner Research. She has published widely in national and international journals in her field.  
ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0007-3354-9998>

**Ina Suryani** is an associate professor and she teaches English for Special Purposes and Technical Writing at the Centre of Excellence for Unmanned Ariel Vehicle, Faculty of Business and Communication, Universiti Malaysia Perlis. Her research areas are in Genre Analysis and Text Analysis. ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3193-4706>

**Ratnawati Mohd Asraf** is a professor at the Kulliyah of Education, International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM). She was formerly the Chief Editor of Educational Awakening: Journal of the Behavioural Sciences, IIUM and the Director of the Research Management Centre, IIUM. ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4132-1989>

**Zolkefli Bahador** is a lecturer at School of Education, Universiti Utara Malaysia, His research interests include e-learning and instructional technology. ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0007-5365-4365>

**Nadya Supian** is currently Assistant Professor with the Department of Modern Languages, Faculty of Creative Industries in Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman. Her research interests include metacognition in language learning, mobile assisted language learning, vocabulary acquisition, critical thinking, game-based language learning and semiotics. ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3720-8660>

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**Appendices**  
**Appendix A**

***Teacher Nazmi's Reflection after the Intervention***

*20 pupils read the passage correctly but the rest 8 pupils still did not know what to do. The advanced pupils carried out the task successfully compared to the others. The teacher was the facilitator during the lesson and appointed the good students to guide their friends. They were really interested and felt relieved as they could read, understand and chose correct content to answer the questions with their friends. The quick action to separate them into groups helped me to guide the needed pupils individually. I was satisfied. Satisfaction on what had happened in the classroom. It was because to deliver knowledge is the main target. The knowledge gained by the pupils from easy to difficult seemed to be ample for the time being." Pupils enjoyed the lesson but sometimes they seem really confused and did not know what to do because they lack of vocabularies. Peer learning is helpful for them to have during the lesson." I should be more concerned and aware to enable me to try harder, to prepare a well-planned lesson and to prepare the teaching aids and materials for the students. I need to separate the students based on their different abilities to do the activities individually, with peers or in a group. I plan to choose PBL approach and recycle materials based on their interest, knowledge, surrounding and family background to prepare the next lesson. I hope this will arouse their interest to involve in the classroom activities. I feel like using songs and microphone to let them speak and correct each other". I should planned well prepared lesson to face the intermediate and slow learners. The teaching aids used should be more interesting and meaningful. The learning process should be fun and enjoyable.*

*(Teacher Nazmi, Reflection journal)*