

Social Media as a Platform for Reflecting Practice: Experience of Malaysian Pre-service ESL Teachers

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ABSTRACT

Past studies have lamented that pre-service teachers are unable to reflect critically and lack the opportunity to reflect as a community. However, these issues can be potentially addressed with social media. Therefore, this study explored the experience of pre-service teachers engaging in reflective practice via video blogs (vlogs) in Facebook. The study ascertained how pre-service teachers use social media in reflective practice and the barriers to their adoption using such approach. The study was a qualitative investigation using content analysis and focused group discussion. The respondents comprised a group of pre-service teachers who were undergoing teaching practice in East Malaysia. Thematic analysis was used to generate salient findings from data gathered. The respondents demonstrated their ability to capture their reflections in vlogs and share them on social media, with focus on the practice and observation stages. While the study was planned for reflective practice, the respondents have utilised social media to share their teaching ideas and techniques. The barriers to active participation have been identified to be time constraint and the fear of offending one another in providing feedback. This study proved the affordance of social media as a platform for pre-service teachers to share their practice and to engage in reflective practice as a community. However, teacher educators who wish to adopt this approach would need to address issues such as perceived usefulness in engaging in reflective practice online and the reluctance among pre-service teachers to provide honest comments to one another.

KEYWORDS: Teacher education, reflective practice, ESL, social media, pre-service teachers.

Introduction

The ability to engage in critical reflective practice is essential to professional development of the teaching profession. Critical reflective practice can lead to a higher level of teacher agency, which refers to a teacher's ability to reflect and consequently make improvements in his or her own practices (Yuan & Lee, 2014). In order for reflective practice to flourish, the presence of a community of practitioners is a must, as it provides a platform for the members to share their experience, information, problems and solutions (Harris & Jones, 2010; Yang, 2009). As teachers reflect on their lessons together, they would engage in awareness raising and deeper reflection which could lead to a change of their professional practice (Nambiar &

Thang, 2016). In the Malaysian context, the implementation of Malaysian Education Development Plan introduced the concept of professional learning communities as a means to help teachers develop professionally (Ansawi & Pang, 2017). Professional learning community refers to as a group of individuals who share and critically examine their practices in a positive, ongoing, reflective, collaborative, inclusive and learner-oriented manner (Stoll, Bolam, McMohan, Wallace & Thomas, 2001). Professional learning communities encourage teachers not to work and reflect as individuals but as a community of practitioners.

Teachers who can reflect critically and reflect within a community of practitioners would stand to benefit greatly in advancing their practice as ESL teachers in the context of this study. In training future ESL teachers, teacher education has a role to play in equipping pre-service ESL teachers with the ability to not only engage in reflective practice, but also within a community setting. This study would investigate the use of social media as a platform to engage critical reflective practice among ESL pre-service teachers in a community.

Literature Review

Reflective practice of pre-service teachers

Past studies in Malaysia have highlighted numerous issues faced by pre-service teachers in reflective practice. Choy, Yim and Sedhu (2019) discovered that though pre-service teachers log reflective journals in their teaching practice or practicum, their reflective process were not explicitly examined and infused into their journals. This led to many teachers struggling to think critically and to manage diversity in students' ability and background (Kuldass, Hashim, & Ismail, 2015; Othman & Mohamad, 2014). Ong, Swanto and AlSaqqaf (2018) revealed that pre-service teachers reported lack of strategies which could help them to reflect critically on their lesson, and to devise possible solutions to the issues that they encountered. There are some possible explanations for these deficits. The first is a lack of exposure to real teaching scenarios and difficult situations experienced by pre-service teachers during their teaching practice (Mukhtar, Hasim, & Md Yunus, 2018). Ong et al. (2018) study pointed the other reason as a dearth of opportunity for them to reflect and discuss their lessons with one another. This suggests that pre-service teachers lack authentic experience other than their own to reflect upon and they seldom make use of their community to share meaning and construct knowledge collectively.

Other than the issues with pre-service teachers' reflective practice, there also exist several gaps in the research of reflective practice particularly in the Malaysian context. In the studies conducted in Malaysia the objectives have mainly been to determine the status quo of reflective practice and to highlight the issues and challenges (Ong et al., 2017; Wong, Mansor, & Samsudin, 2015), while there is a need to investigate useful strategies in addressing Malaysian pre-service teachers' challenges in reflective practice. Issues and solutions aside, Mann and Walsh (2017) have pointed out that past research on reflective practice has been oriented towards examining written reflection, when it could be insightful to explore reflection in the spoken form and perhaps mediated online. On the other hand, Farrell (2016) urged for a shift to study reflective practice among pre-service teachers from an individualistic perspective to a more community-based, collaborative one, as studies have shown the potential of social media in promoting active sharing and discussion among pre-service teachers in their post-lesson reflection. It is in light of these studies that this research was culminated.

Engaging reflective practice in a community

One criticism to the current approach in reflective practice is that it has been conventionally undertaken as a solitary process that does not reflect the reality of language teaching, which is collective and participative in nature (Mann & Walsh, 2017; Yuan & Mak, 2018). Schön (1983) postulates that reflective practice is best undertaken by thoughtfully considering one's own experiences in applying knowledge to practice while being supported by professionals of the same discipline. Teachers who form a community to discuss their teaching performance would lead to further engagement in reflective practice (Demissie, 2015). This is because teachers who reflect together have the unique opportunity to have their ideas, knowledge, and praxis validated by one another. In the pre-service context, studies have shown that pre-service teachers who worked together were able to share their experience with their fellow teaching fraternity, leading to realising of personal flaws and addressing of one's shortcomings (Nair & Ghanaguru, 2017). Pre-service teachers who engaged in reflective practice within a community are able to receive meaningful feedbacks on their teaching, which in turn "generated a context in which the pre-service teachers were able to focus on the development of their knowledge and skills of teaching" (Daniel, Auhl, & Hastings, 2013, p.170). These arguments therefore justify the need for pre-service teachers to engage in reflective practice as a community of practitioners during the practicum phase of their training, as practicum presents the only opportunity where they can practice the knowledge and skills that they have acquired via teacher education (Yunus, Hashim, Mohd Ishak, & Mahamod, 2010).

Social media as a platform for reflective practice

As social media becomes ubiquitous in the society, many communities of professionals begin to develop online communities of practice (CoP), where knowledge construction is supported by social, technologically-advanced learning environments (Ozturk & Ozcinar, 2013). Online CoP has the strength in that it utilises technology, thus eliminating geographical limitation. It also allows for collaborative, both synchronous and asynchronous interactions to share and expand experience, knowledge and skills. Participation in an online environment allowed 'students to participate actively as knowledgeable, reflective, creative, and critical members in cyber communities' (Sun, 2010, p. 378). Social media sites, such as Facebook and Twitter, are capable of providing a robust yet personalised social experiences for academic purposes (Anderson & Justice, 2016). Greenhow, Gleason, Marich, and Bret Staudt Willet (2017) revealed that tertiary students mainly used social media platform to keep abreast with development related to their field of study, disseminate knowledge of their own or others' and build knowledge collaboratively with peers. Studies in the past have consistently showed that learners prefer social network sites, such as Facebook, to traditional and formal Learning Management System (LMS), for both academic and informal discussions (Deng & Tavares, 2013; Divall & Kirwin, 2012; Gray, Annabell, & Kennedy, 2010).

Other than being preferred by students, Facebook can serve as a platform for pre-service teachers to reflect together as a community. Oakley, Pegrum and Johnson (2014) argued that online-mediated collaborative reflection enables pre-service teachers to post comments on posted entries, providing them the chance to work together in tackling issues and answering questions. Thus, they are encouraged to reflect deeper by providing critiques and comments for one another's opinions and suggestions (Burhan-Horasanlı and Ortaçtepe,

2016; Cheng & Chau, 2013). The group feature of Facebook has also proven to be a reliable platform to facilitate online learning and discussion (Manca & Ranieri, 2016). Deng and Yuen (2011) developed a framework on reflection engagement on online educational setting with the argument that: 1) reflection is triggered when respondents read each other's reflective entries; and 2) commenting on reflective entries lead to the beginning of reflective dialogue and reflection within a community setting as illustrated in figure 1.

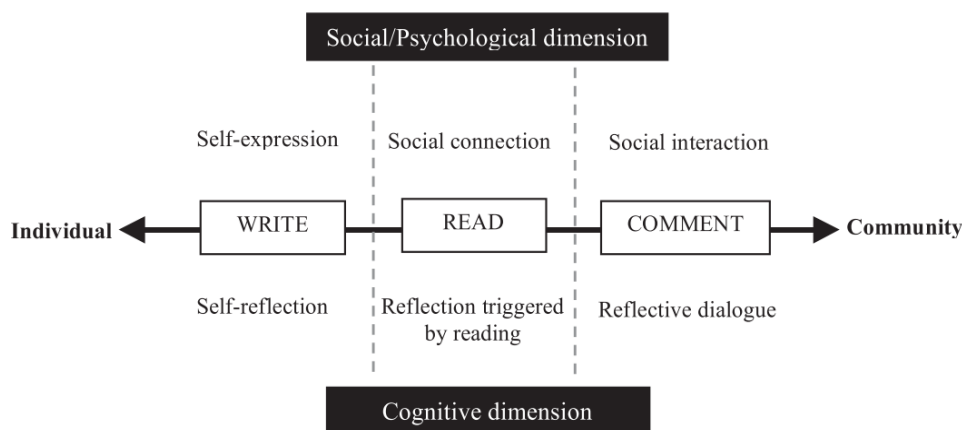


Figure 1. Framework on reflection engaged in online, educational setting

Other than allowing pre-service teachers to engage in deeper reflection both individually and collaboratively, participation of pre-service teachers in online collaborative reflection has also simulated a professional learning community which they would eventually participate when they become beginning teachers in the near future (Anderson & Justice, 2016). Nevertheless, Stoszowski and Collins (2017) warned that the nature of online interactions may not be harmonious, as there were instances of criticism, disagreement and ideas and opinions being challenged when teachers shared their reflections and thoughts.

The medium of reflection where the respondents shared in social media for this study was video blogs, or more commonly known as vlogs. Vlogs are very popular means for the people to express their thoughts, observations and opinions about their lives and surroundings (Lange, 2014). Fox & Cayari (2016) believed that video logs can promote ownership and better learning achievements. However, Izzah and Hadi (2018) lamented that the use of vlogs as an educational tool is still rather novel and the use has mostly confined to personal lives and hobbies. Yuan, Mak and Yang (2020), who studied pre-service teachers sharing reflective videos of their micro teaching projects in universities, discovered that the teachers demonstrated a higher level of interest towards engaging in reflective practice, due to the authenticity and interactivity nature of vlogs. Hence, this study investigated the use of social media by using vlogs as the medium of reflective practice for pre-service teachers undergoing their practicum.

Methodology

This study was undertaken to ascertain whether social media can be utilised as a platform for reflective practice. If yes, how would pre-service teachers use social media to engage in reflective practice. The second question was to investigate the barriers for pre-service teachers when engaging in reflective practice as an online community. This research was conducted as a case study, as it is “an empirical inquiry that investigates contemporary

phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context” (Yin, 2009, p. 18). The respondents in this study comprised a group of 12, 3 male and 9 female pre-service teachers who major in the Teaching of English as a Second Language (TESL) degree programme in a Teacher Education Institute. They have previously completed a 12-week first phase practicum prior to undertaking their second phase of practicum which was also for 12 weeks. They were chosen specifically for the study, as they would be in the situation where they would most likely benefit from the participating in reflection via social media.

Before they participated in this research project, the participants received training on the use of vlogs, Facebook Group and the 5-step CoPORA reflective model. The reflective model is developed from 3 models of reflective practice: Kolb’s (1984) stages of learning, Bain, Ballantyne, Mills, and Lester (2002) 5R reflective framework, and Farrell (2015) 5 steps of reflective practice. CoPORA model was used in this study as it provides a systematic, step by step approach in engaging reflective practice with the practitioner’s personal teaching beliefs, or cognition, being the starting point of the reflective process. Table 1 describes the 5 steps involved in the CoPORA reflective model.

Table 1. 5 steps of the CoPORA reflective model

Cognition	Teachers articulate their beliefs, knowledge, and thoughts which they hold on to in carrying out their professional work.
Practice	Teachers describe the practice and the events that take place in the lesson proper.
Observation	Teachers made remarks and notes about the events that they can observe for themselves in the classroom.
Rationalisation	Teachers provide possible reasons or explanation for the observations that they have made in their classroom.
Action	Teachers formulate possible solutions to any issues or problems identified.

In this study, the respondents were coached to use the CoPORA reflective model to focus only on a particular stage of their lesson before they proceeded to record themselves in a vlog. This is to ensure that the reflective task focuses on critical incidents and not daily events which in turn can result in changes to personal beliefs and practice (Wong, Mansor & Samsudin, 2015). After they have recorded their vlogs, the participants were asked to upload into the private Facebook Group which had been set up by the researcher. The establishment of the Facebook group allowed the participants of the study and the researcher to view each other’s vlogs and to ask questions and to give comments and suggestions. The respondents were asked to post 2 videos for the duration of 6 weeks.

The research instruments used to gather the data were content analysis and focus group interview. The content analysis involved two sources of data. First, the vlogs, which were recorded following the CoPORA reflective model and subsequently shared by the participants in the Facebook Group. Second, the Facebook Group Comments which the participants posted in response to the vlogs shared by their peers. A deductive approach was used to analyse the vlogs and comments, where the CoPORA reflective model and Hara, Shachaf, and Stoerger (2009) coding scheme for online CoP activities were adopted

respectively as the categorization matrix in the analysis. Nevertheless, codes were also generated inductively for the data which were not able to be categorized using the matrices identified.

Subsequently, four sessions of focus group interview (FGI) were conducted with an intention to elicit the participants' thoughts and experience of engaging in reflective practice via vlogs and social media. The researcher was also interested to discover the barriers to the use of such approach among the participants. The rapport which would facilitate the ease of interaction among FGI participants had already been established as they have studied together for 5 semesters. The participants were assigned with pseudonyms to ensure anonymity. The FGI was analysed using inductive coding, with the codes further reduced into categories and salient themes which seek to answer the research questions.

The data which were coded from content analysis and FGI were later subjected to thematic analysis. The study adopted the approach in conducting thematic analysis advocated by Braun and Clarke (2006), where the research moved back and forth between the inductive data gathered from the codes and the themes which were generated. As the data from multiple sources would not only contribute to a deeper understanding of the studied case (Baxter & Jack, 2008), but also ensuring a level of credibility in the interpretations and conclusions drawn from the research findings (Carlson, 2010). As further efforts to ensure trustworthiness, two teacher educators who were not involved with the research but were familiar with the field of enquiry were engaged to cross-analyse sample excerpts of the data in order to ensure an acceptable level of inter-coder reliability for the content analysis. The data gathered from this study was also presented and vetted by the participants via a member-checking exercise. Table 2 shows the research instruments used in the study and the initials assigned to each instrument to facilitate the ease of reference in the presentation of study findings.

Table 2. Source of data and their initials

No.	Source of data.	Initials
1	Focus Group Interview	FGI
2	Video blogs (Vlogs)	VLG
3	Facebook Group Comments	COM

Data Analysis and Discussion

The analysis and findings of this study are presented in a series of themes. Research question one was answered by theme 1, 2 and 3 while theme 4 and 5 answered research question two.

Theme 1: Participants reflected via vlogs and social media have heavily focused on Practice and Observation.

Ong, W.A, Suyansah, S., & AlSaqqaf, A. (2020). *The English Teacher*, 49(3), 105-121.

In answering the first and second research questions, the participants of the study were able to express their reflections in the form of vlogs and share them in social media. As their recorded vlogs were based on the CoPORA reflective model, table 3 shows the word count percentage for vlogs based on the steps in the model. Do note that an additional category, introduction/ closing, was added into the analysis.

Table 3. Word count percentage for vlogs based on the steps in CoPORA reflective model

Sections	Percentage		
	Round 1	Round 2	Average
Introduction/Closing	10.38%	9.72%	10.05%
Cognition (Co)	13.40%	13.60%	13.50%
Practice (P)	26.19%	25.53%	25.86%
Observation (O)	21.38%	21.47%	21.42%
Rationalisation (R)	13.45%	13.32%	13.39%
Action (A)	15.19%	16.36%	15.78%
Total:	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

From the table, the average percentage recorded for the two rounds of vlogs posted have shown that the respondents have focused slightly more than a quarter of their vlogs explaining the ‘Practice’ step in the CoPORA, followed by ‘Observation’. These two stages have consistently been the longest part in the vlogs, as the participants took great effort in describing what they did in their lessons and what they could see for themselves in the lesson. However, these two sections were slightly more focused on ‘reporting’ rather than ‘reflecting’. The sections which require more critical reflection, such as Cognition and Rationalisation, were rather small compared to Practice and Observation, which suggest that the respondents could have engaged in more reasoning and reflection on their beliefs and the issues behind the problem they have encountered. Nevertheless, respondents did spend some time to reflect on the Action, which is the problem-solving aspect of their reflection.

Table 4. Categories of comments posted in the Facebook Group

Categories of comments	Round 1		Round 2	
	Num. of comments	%	Num. of comments	%
knowledge sharing	35	25.74%	54	29.89%
compliment	33	24.26%	37	21.26%
appreciation	17	12.50%	21	12.07%
agreement	8	5.88%	14	8.05%
buy-in/ take up	8	5.88%	6	3.45%
clarification	6	4.41%	8	4.60%
empathic statements	2	1.47%	9	5.17%
personal realisation	6	4.41%	5	2.87%
solicitation	10	7.35%	7	4.02%
encouragement	2	1.47%	6	3.45%
acknowledgement	9	6.62%	9	5.17%
Total	136	100.00%	176	100.00%

Table 4 above listed the categories of comments posted in the Facebook Group in response to the vlogs. Knowledge Sharing, compliments and appreciation constituted slightly more than half of the comments posted. The results of the study are quite different from Stoszkowski and Collins (2017), whose study of comments on online blogs listed knowledge sharing, clarification and solicitation. While the comments in their study were directly about seeking and exchanging information, the comments in this study prioritised expressing gratitude for posting and providing positive vibes to one another. The discovery on the categories of comments is further discussed in theme 5.

Theme 2: Participants use social media to reflect on each other's issues.

The participants, by reflecting as a community online via social media, also had the opportunity to reflect together with the peers by watching their vlogs and thinking about the issues presented in the logs. In the comments given to their peers, the participants have offered many insights which were evidence of the participants reflecting on their peers' issue. These insights were based either on the suggestion that their peers made in their own vlogs, or by agreeing with their rationalisation to the issues that they face in the classroom.

Anyway, introducing to them the elements that are involved in your next activity is always a good idea. Moreover, your activity was brilliant! It makes it easier for us teachers to check for errors... plus, we don't need to prepare too much teaching aids for that.

COM- Richard's comment on Izzati's action in Vlog 2

May be you can encourage the use of dictionary in your classroom to help your pupils to figure out the meaning of the words by themselves. It might be a time-consuming task but it is also a good way for pupils to learn vocabulary.

COM- Fiona's suggestion and comment for issue faced by Ruth in Vlog 2

Low proficiency pupils are easily intimidated when they are with higher proficiency pupils. As a result, they are demotivated and become passive.

COM- Gary's comment on the issue faced by Candice in Vlog 1

The comments shared among participants functioned in two ways. First, they affirmed the decisions and thoughts of the participants in the reflective vlogs. The participants have supported the actions in the vlogs by offering alternative justifications and perspectives, which in turn provided moral support and affirmation to the participants. Second, the comments functioned as evidences of the participants reflecting on the vlog contents, as these comments can only be placed in response to the content of the vlogs. So the participants, by virtue of commenting on the content of their peers' vlogs, gave themselves more opportunity to engage in reflective practice not only on their own issues, but those experienced by their peers undergoing practicum as well. Moradkhani and Shirazizadeh (2017) have lamented that teachers rarely had the opportunity to discuss their professional practice due to time constraints. This is not ideal for teachers, as a reflection that is conducted individually would greatly limit one's ability to develop professionally (Zeichner, 1994). In this study, the participants were given the chance to reflect on the issues faced by the peers though the vlogs shared in Facebook Group and they are not limited to the issues which they have encountered

personally. This supported the argument by Mauri, Clarà, Colomina, and Onrubia (2017) who posited that providing pre-service teachers with the space to engage in reflection in a community could encourage them to internalise the process of reflection itself. The outcome of the reflection is shown in the constructive critiques and comments that they gave one another at the end of every vlogs shared.

Theme 3: Social media can serve as a platform to share ELT practice

Social media is proven in this study to be a viable platform for pre-service teachers to share ELT practices. While the participants reflected on the Practice stage of the model in the vlogs, they also made an extra effort of showcasing the materials that they used in the lesson, rather than relying solely on narrating their practice in the lesson.

So this is an example of the omelette that they have created. So this is the omelette and this is the food given to them. So they have to cut and paste this foods for example chicken, onions, peppers tomatoes, cheese and potato. So the pupils have to cut and paste the omelette.

VLG – Carmen Round 1

So before asking the pupils to do their own solar system, I demonstrated so in the end after they have finished doing the solar system, a group representative will come in front and present their work. A sample of the end product is like this.

VLG- Candice round 1

These are some of the words they written and I told them to decorate the book based on the good deeds that they have written. The decoration and arts they have made. These are from year 3 so I am quite impressed. Good friend. Being a good friend for example. This is another example she wrote a lot of good deeds.

VLG- Richard round 2

The underlined words in the excerpts above, such as ‘this’, ‘example’, ‘sample’ and ‘like this’, indicated that the participants showed the materials to their peers in the vlog. This gave them a visual representation of what they were presenting. In addition, the participants were also giving ideas to their peers as well as they were reflecting via vlogs. In the FGI, the participants shared their thoughts on the reason why they have focused mostly on their practice.

When I tried to explain my activity I will try in my head to like explain it as detailed as possible so anyone who was watching the video will not get confused about my activity

FGI- Richard

because I was excited to tell everyone what I did for my class, and I chose the activity that I liked the most for that class so that's why I tend to talk a lot more about it.

FGI- Carmen

The participants' deliberate explanation could be due to the vlogs being the only way that they peers can learn about their activity, as they did not record themselves teaching to be shared in vlogs. Hence, they resorted to furnishing as much details as they could to help their peers understand their activity, as this in turn would be helpful for them to give comments and feedback on the activity that they have reflected upon in their vlogs. In the FGI, the participants opined that they would watch the vlogs and read the comments that followed as they felt they could potentially learn something new and useful from their peers.

Maybe except the part when they explain their activities that part I like, because I also want to learn the activity.

FGI- Candice

And maybe also we can read on the videos and other people's comments by that we can get new ideas we can think of something else... something that is out of the box. I think it really helped us to be a better teacher. I asked them for permission to use their ideas.

FGI- Gary

While the study was originally undertaken with an intention of developing the participants' reflective practice, they seemed to have benefited greatly from the ideas shared via social media. Findings from the study have supported the evidence of them wanting to and having attempted to try out the ideas given by their peers. Quite a number of the comments posted in vlogs are evidences of pre-service teacher intending to adapt the activities suggested by their peers in the vlogs. Some examples include:

Your suggestion of having the pupils talk to their MKO is actually worth trying. I will try it out in my next lesson

COM- Richard's comment on
Gary's 1st Vlog

I never thought of conducting the activity in pairs. I would love to try it out in my upcoming lessons

COM- Ruth's comment on
Laura's 1st Vlog

When quizzed in the FGI as to whether the participants have taken up the ideas shown by their classmates, they have given affirmative responses, which suggest that the participants did not stop at merely expressing their desire to take up the idea, but to make an actual attempt in their classroom.

I tried it in my last observation it did work well because when I watch the video, the suggestion was like this and the comments added another suggestion so when I actually did the thing it actually worked for me. I think it was on class management.

FGI- Richard

I did pick up a few things, like Richard's activity, the small book.

FGI- Candice

For the group work, last time I used to do 4 to 5 people in one group. But then I saw not only the comments on my post but also the comments on other people's videos, some of them suggest to do a smaller group of 3. I actually tried that in my classroom and it works.

FGI- Fiona

Actually Alia tried my activity in class and she told me that it was a success so I am happy

FGI- Ruth

The evidence of participants taking up the ideas shared via their reflective vlogs possibly answered the reason why the vlogs have focused on practice, as they made it easier for their peers to learn those ideas to be implemented in the classroom. Sathappan & Sathappan (2018) listed classroom management, time management and employing suitable teaching methodologies as the major areas which are of immediate concern to Malaysian pre-service teachers when they are undergoing teaching practice. In areas where their repertoire is lacking, pre-service teachers turned to their peers for new ideas and strategies which they could in turn use to help them to improve their performance in their teaching practice (Gutiérrez, Adasme, & Westmacott, 2019). The strategy was aptly proven in this study.

Theme 4: Participation was limited by time constraint

In answering the second research question, the participants found it difficult to record and share their vlogs and comments on social media due to time constraint. This is due the fact that they were doing their practicum at the same time. There were two reasons for the time constraints. First, it was a laborious activity, time consuming effort of recording the vlogs for sharing on the social media.

There was once I took 45 mins to took one video. I think it was for the second cycle. I started at 1 pm and then I finish at nearly 2pm. Only for one video so yeah.

FGI-Ruth

Personally I don't really hate it but to find the time to record it la, then it is a little bit time consuming for me

FGI-Alia

Their experience could tie to the hindrance experienced in using technology. Mumford and Dikilitaş (2019) warned that the difficulty experienced in using technology could become an obstacle to the progress of pre-service teacher's reflection. Hence, there is a need for pre-service teachers to be taught how to use online applications in order to help them to engage in reflective practice virtually (Long & Hall, 2015; Too, 2013). Other than developing technological efficacy, learning the skills of using technology is also important to reduce the user anxiety and allow the user to participate fully subsequently reap the benefits from participating in online discussions (Fox & Cayari, 2016). In this study, having the participants trained to use vlogs competently and to troubleshoot issues could have eliminated the factor of time constraints in the production of vlogs.

The second time constraint came from the pre-service teachers juggling their teaching practice and additional tasks that were assigned by their host schools where they underwent their teaching practice.

Sometimes when we are a bit too busy we forget to reply the comment. When I posted my second video when they comment and when they post their comments I forget not because of the weakness of the project maybe it is from my own weakness my time allocation you know in school they teachers they like to 'Can you help?'

FGI-Gary

that time we were having observation and I am not sure maybe some of them they felt that they didn't have the time to upload video because that week it was a busy week then they have to rush with their observation by lecturers...

FGI-Carmen

just like them I watched the video then like some of the ideas I read on the comments of oh my other friends have already gave the idea so I need to think to another idea when I keep thinking of another idea I got other things to do so I do other things first and then I forgot about it.

FGI- Hannah

The excerpts also revealed that not all participants considered the participation in this study an important aspect of their practicum. This can be seen from the participants procrastinating or not remembering to post their vlogs and comments on the Facebook group. As the participation is voluntary, the participants would have to see the benefits of their participation or they would respond apathetically to the vlogs and comments. Pre-service teachers were found to struggle with time management both inside and outside of classroom during the teaching practice (Sathappan & Sathappan, 2018). Hence, while their participation can potentially be made easier via using training and familiarisation with video blogs and social media, the participants would still have to make an effort to participate actively in posting vlogs and comments in Facebook Group.

Theme 5: Participation was limited due to the fear of offending each other

In this study, though it is encouraging that the participants would share ideas, thoughts and insights in their comments of vlogs, leaving compliments and appreciation showed a possibly very polite, formal and diplomatic approach on how the participants engage with each other in commenting the vlogs.

They were being polite I think, because I myself when I comment, I try to be very positive and polite.

FGI- Diane

Because I notice that when they comment on my videos they always start with something positive.

FGI- Fiona

When prompted to give example 'I really like the activity but... I think that's a great idea but...'

FGI- Ruth

The excerpts from the FGI demonstrate how the participants approached commenting on vlogs with positive messages, such as appreciation for posting the vlogs or compliments for good reflection or good activity shared, before proceeding to offer opinions and suggestions. The type of comments posted in this study is more diplomatic and affectively oriented compared to those in Stoszkowski and Collins (2017) study. In the FGI, the participants have expressed that they were not able to be very frank or critical in their comments for fear of offending their fellow classmates.

Because we need to like prevent ourselves from offending someone or (Olivia: being rude) like that.

FGI- Richard

For me yes I was honest but I didn't really give suggestion. I wasn't really critical with their reflection because they are friends...

FGI- Diane

people like best friends right so sometimes you cannot say something because you are very scared that someone will be hurt by what I said if I am being too honest because there are a few activities that I don't think it's suitable or what... I want to say it but it might hurt their feelings.

FGI- Candice

From the excerpts, the participants prioritised the feelings of their peers to providing honest feedbacks. As the participants could not be more honest in their feedback, their comments would mask their actual thoughts and opinions on the vlogs posted by their peers. This further confirms what Pham & Renshaw (2015) have discovered, where pre-service teachers would refrain from critiquing, albeit positively, as they wish to preserve their cordial relationship with each other. Another explanation is the fear of having their comments misconstrued as a personal criticism (Ong, Swanto, & Alsaqqaf, 2018).

The nature of the relationship of the participants in these studies could explain this finding. Participants of this study were a small group of 12 which were very close to one another. The degree of closeness to one another could explain the diplomatic approach taken by the participants in engaging one another. The finding could also be attributed to cultural values. Nguyen and Ngo (2018) opined that Asian, Confucians virtues, such as politeness and respecting seniors, could affect Asian pre-service teachers in engaging one another for lesson feedback. Nevertheless, Anderson and Justice (2016) lamented that the inability of pre-service teachers to confront or engage their peers in discussion would adversely limit their participation in online discussions of their teaching practice. A more open and honest approach in commenting would need to be created in order to facilitate critical reflective practice among pre-service teachers.

Conclusion

The study, in investigating the use of social media as a platform for pre-service teachers to reflect as a community, has unearthed findings which bear significance to teacher education. First, this research established the affordance and feasibility of using social media to reflect and to share practice as a community of pre-service teachers. The findings proved that they

would experiment in their practice and take effort in encouraging their peer's success in conducting engaging, challenging yet effective lessons in the classroom (Bullough et al., 2003), which can be seen in the exchanges of Facebook Group comments. Baskara (2017) has argued for the affordance of vlogs as a great platform to share reflections, knowledge and ideas within the learning community. In this case, this study has proven Baskara's argument to be correct in the Malaysian context. However, the participants could be encouraged to engage more on 'reflecting', rather than the 'reporting' aspect of the reflective practice, as can be seen the analysis of the vlogs.

The participants' experience in this study proved that social media could play a role in providing the space to engage in reflective practice. The respondents would not stop only at reflecting on their own issue when they recorded their vlogs, but they also, through commenting on their peers' vlogs, reflected on the issues faced by their fellow pre-service teachers. The Facebook Group comments gathered from the study provided valuable raw data that addressed another research gap that exists in the field of reflective practice, in particular spoken or dialogic reflection engaged by peers (Mann & Walsh, 2017). The study has also expanded the coding schemes used by Hara, Shachaf, and Stoerger (2009) by giving specific coding on the content shared by the participants as they commented on their peer's vlogs. The expanded coding scheme would be useful in studying future interactions of the online community of practice among pre-service or even in-service teachers.

The voluntary nature of the study resulted in uneven level of participation among the participants for this study. Some participants have been frank when asked about their participation of the study, with most citing procrastination and also being occupied with non-teaching related task at host schools being the reasons. This situation can be remedied in two manners. The first would be to convince pre-service teachers of the benefits of participating in such a project. The second would be to make participation in such a project compulsory, perhaps as a part of the assessment task for courses undertaken for undergraduate study. These approaches could encourage the participants to be more active in their reflections and commenting, thus reaping the benefits of reflecting as an online community of ESL teachers.

The findings of the study pointed at the possibility that the pre-service teachers consciously chose a more polite, diplomatic approach in sharing their practice and commenting on each other's posts for fear of offending each other. Nevertheless, the reluctance to comment would have to be addressed as the feedbacks received are crucial to the development of pre-service teachers' teaching practice. Teacher educators can explore either anonymous posting, where the identities of the pre-service teachers were withheld during the posting process. Alternatively, the participants would need to be prepared to receive honest feedback from their peers as a means to advance themselves in their reflection and teaching practice.

There are a few lessons for the teacher educators and pre-service teachers. They can learn to be more technologically savvy and equip themselves with skills and knowledge on using vlogs and social media for academic and professional purposes. Next, teacher educator can use the approach in this study to partially assess pre-service teachers in their teaching practice, therefore encouraging higher level of participation in such a project. Pre-service teachers also need to be more honest and open about accepting criticism and comments from their peers on their reflection and teaching. Ultimately, is hoped that the opportunity to work together in reflective practice can be useful and beneficial for the development of the pre-service teachers' practice as future ESL teachers.

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