

Keeping a Critical Eye on One's Own Teaching Practice: EFL Teachers' Use of Reflective Teaching Journals

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Although journal writing is a popular pedagogical class assignment required by teachers in EFL classes, there is still room for research into the use of journal writing by teachers themselves to monitor the effectiveness of their teaching practice. The purpose of this study was to investigate the effect of keeping reflective teaching journals by EFL teachers in their own classrooms. The study examined reflective teaching journals — written or recorded accounts of teaching — kept by teachers in the study for the purpose of later reflection. The corpus data in the study was comprised of (1) the reflective teaching journal entries which teachers kept for twelve weeks and (2) transcriptions of regular group discussions that took place for the purpose of sharing and discussing important issues addressing the teachers' own professional growth. The study explored the following research questions: a) What functions do reflective teaching journals serve for EFL teachers? b) How do reflective teaching journals help teachers solve teaching problems they face? and c) What effects does sharing of the reflective teaching journals in the support group have on empowering teachers in their EFL profession? Results of the study included substantial qualitative reports, which reinforced the significance of EFL teachers' use of reflective teaching journals as a self-monitoring device in their teaching process. The theoretical and pedagogical implications of the study are set out and discussed.