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Exploring Pre service teachers' perceptions on Reflective Journalling during Internship

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Abstract

The descriptive study aimed to explore the perceptions and experiences of preservice teacher trainees regarding reflective journaling as a tool for professional and personal development. A total of 136 preservice teachers (89 females and 47 males) from science (63.3%) and humanities (36.8%) backgrounds, enrolled in B.Ed., B.Sc.B.Ed., and B.A.B.Ed. programs, participated in the study. Data were collected using a questionnaire with both closed and open-ended questions. The trainees maintained weekly reflective journals during a 16-week internship, guided by structured prompts focusing on lesson planning, execution, and evaluation. The findings revealed that reflective journaling significantly enhanced self-awareness, classroom management skills, instructional planning, and interpersonal relationships. Trainees developed stronger problem-solving and decision-making abilities, adapted their teaching strategies based on student needs, and improved their communication and collaboration with peers and mentors. The open-ended responses highlighted the evolution of participants into reflective practitioners who are more empathetic, confident, and responsive to diverse classroom dynamics. Reflective journaling

emerged as a powerful practice for bridging theory and practice in teacher education, fostering continuous professional growth and transformation.

Keywords: Reflective journaling, preservice teachers, teacher education , reflective teaching

Introduction

Teachers are regarded as the pillars of society, as they shoulder the responsibility of preparing responsible citizens. They are considered as the builders of the nation, serving as facilitators of knowledge construction while enhancing 21st century skills such as critical thinking, creativity, and problem solving. A teacher's duty is not limited to imparting academic knowledge but also inculcating values, ethics and social skills. It is certain that a students' love for learning and their ability to pursue their passion and reach their full potential depends largely on their teachers. The National Curriculum Framework for teacher education (NCFTE, 2009) focused on holistic approach of teacher preparation that has theoretical understanding, practical skills, and reflective practice.

Reflective teaching is a crucial practice that enables individuals to analyze their teaching strategies and interactions with students. The reflective practice helps the teachers to identify their strengths, weaknesses and what went well in the classroom and what didn't. Reflective journaling not only benefits the teachers in the teaching learning process but also enhances the student learning outcome. When the teachers reflect on their teaching experiences in the classroom, they can better tailor their instruction to meet the diverse needs of students which lead to a deeper understanding and a more inclusive environment. It has been argued that in order to make teacher education programs produce reflective practitioners, pre-service teachers must be encouraged to use reflective journals as a means of assessing and tracking their pedagogical practices, particularly by focusing on the strengths and weaknesses of their daily activities (O'Brien, 2016; Orland-Barak & Yinon, 2007). This practice could lead to more successful teaching both in the present and in the future (Lee, 2007; Minott, 2009; Al-karasneh, 2014). Research has shown that journal writing could enhance both the quality of teaching and learning (Teekman, 2000; Bolton, 2005). Reflective journaling helps individuals align their actions with their teaching practices by serving as a record of "what works and what does not" in their teaching (Garza & Smith, 2015:12; Thompson & Pascal, 2012; Zulfikar & Mujiburrahman, 2017). However, as teacher education programs have

expanded, concerns about time management have also increased (Hickson, 2011; Moon, 2004; Collin et al., 2013). Furthermore, it is getting harder to figure out which of those reflections have already occurred during teaching practice (Gould & Taylor, 2017), and pre-service teachers' workload during their teaching practice is growing (Gadsby & Cronin, 2012; Burgoyne & Chuppa-Cornell, 2018).

Reflective teaching is an important process in teacher education, which helps teachers and students to develop skills like decision making, metacognition and logical thinking, etc. (Goodley, 2018). Dewey (1993), the pioneer of reflective practices (Zahid & Khanam, 2019) reported that in Reflective teaching process the teachers look back on their teaching, think and rethink before, during and after the instructional deliberation about the student's problem that happen in the process of achieving targeted goals by which teachers can think about how to deliver the lesson in an efficient way (Zahid & Khanam, 2019). Alsuhaibani (2019) mention that there are four sequential stages linked to questions, which lead teachers to use reflective teaching: (1) describe (What do I do?), (2) Inform (What does this mean?), (3) Confront (How did I come to be like this?), and (4) Construct (How might I do things differently). Reflective teaching engage in self-reflection allows teachers to critically assess their instructional methods, leading to improved teaching efficacy and adaptability, utilizing tools such as logbooks and video analysis helps teachers gain insights into their practices, facilitating a deeper understanding of student needs and classroom dynamics (Lefebvre et al., 2023 & Malicay, 2023).

Reflective teaching practices are crucial for pre-service teachers as they enhance professional development, instructional strategies, and awareness of diversity. Engaging in reflective practice allows pre-service teachers to critically analyze their teaching experiences, leading to improved teaching performance and continuous professional growth (Nurhidayah & Wirza, 2024). It fosters a deeper understanding of pedagogical challenges, such as managing classroom dynamics and addressing diverse student needs, which is essential for cultivating diversity awareness (Whitlock & Marcellus, 2024). Furthermore, reflective practices encourage pre-service teachers to adapt their instructional methods, thereby refining their teaching design and efficacy (Feifei, L. & Luen, 2024). By reflecting on critical incidents during their practicum, pre-service teachers can build professional awareness and develop strategies to overcome challenges in real classroom settings (Karim et al., 2024). These practices not only enhance teaching effectiveness but also contribute

to the overall quality of education, making them indispensable in teacher training programs (Liu et al., 2024).

Preservice teachers often struggle to find adequate time for reflection amidst their teaching responsibilities and coursework demands. The pressure to meet curriculum requirements can limit opportunities for meaningful reflection and some student teachers may resist engaging in reflective practices due to a lack of understanding of their benefits or fear of criticism (Malicay, 2023). This resistance can stem from traditional teaching cultures that prioritize rote learning over reflective inquiry (Ojo, 2023). Additionally, the depth and quality of reflections vary significantly among student teachers, with many remaining at superficial levels (Cojorn & Sonsupap, 2022). Effective reflection requires guidance and structured frameworks, which are often lacking in teacher preparation programs (Segalo & Dube, 2022).

Need and Significance of the study:

Reflective practice has been a key word which has dominated the field of education since 1933 when John Dewey introduced it. He defined the reflective thought as an active, persistent and careful consideration of any belief or form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it, and further conclusions to which it leads. Educational researchers have declared that reflective practice improves teacher effectiveness (Fendler, 2003 and Mayes, 2002). It is asserted by Weber (2013) that reflective practice is skill that guides the preservice teachers in bridging the gap between theory and practice and lead them to be effect come effective teachers in future. The reflective practice is considered as a professional development strategy which encourages the teachers to look both inward at their practice and outwardly at the social conditions in which it has been practiced (Zeichner & Liston,1996). This practice not only helps the teachers make pedagogical choice based on the contexts and also justify the same. A reflective teacher incorporates metacognitive abilities in which they inquire and review in the process of choosing the best possible solution for the issue; hence called as reflective practioners (Weber,2013). In the light of making pre-service teachers into reflective practitioners, the skill of reflection must be fostered from the beginning of the process of learning to teach (Lee, 2007). Reflection is critical process where in the preservice teachers confront their own beliefs of good teacher and good teaching and understand society's expectations (Batchelor, 2012). There are many ways of

promoting this practice in teacher education which includes feedback – hot and cold, discussions, and journal writing.

Journals are very useful tools for reviewing and reflecting the teaching learning process (Lee, 2007). Mariko (2011) discovered that maintaining a reflective journal not only helps individuals document their experiences and observations but also fosters the generation of new ideas and insights to comprehend the situations faced. Reflective journaling enables pre-service teachers to record their personal experiences and observations, facilitating a deeper examination and understanding of these events, which in turn allows them to make informed decisions regarding their actions. Reflective journaling serves as an effective tool to aid pre-service teachers in becoming reflective, critical, and constructive learners.

Pre-service teachers generally perceive reflective teaching practices as beneficial for their professional growth and instructional effectiveness. Research indicates that reflective practices enhance self-awareness, personal growth, and intellectual development, as evidenced by positive feedback from pre-service teachers regarding reflective journaling as a tool for fostering reflective thinking skills during their practicum (Miulescu, 2024). Additionally, reflective practice is seen as crucial for improving teaching performance, as it allows pre-service teachers to analyze their instructional strategies and identify areas for improvement (Nurhidayah & Wirza, 2024). However, challenges remain, such as the difficulty in consistently applying reflective skills, especially within problem-solving contexts (Trisusana et al., 2024). Additionally, the integration of reflective practices in teacher education is crucial for improving teaching performance, as it equips pre-service teachers with the necessary skills to adapt their teaching methods and navigate the complexities of the educational landscape (Feifei, L. & Luen, 2024 and Liu et al., 2024).

However, challenges persist—particularly in the consistent application of reflective skills, especially within problem-solving contexts (Trisusana et al., 2024). Despite these difficulties, integrating reflective practices into teacher education remains essential. Such practices equip pre-service teachers with the necessary skills to adapt their teaching methods and navigate the complexities of the educational landscape (Feifei & Luen, 2024; Liu et al., 2024). The reviews highlighted the crucial role of reflective journaling as a tool for professional development, and hence a study was undertaken to understand preservice teachers' perceptions of reflective journaling with the following objectives.

Objectives of the study

1. To examine the perception of preservice teachers on Reflective journaling
2. To find out the difference in perceptions of preservice teachers on reflective journals with reference to Gender, subjects taught, type of pre service teacher education programme
3. To suggest measures for effective reflective journaling

Design of the study:

This study is descriptive in nature using survey methods to collect the data from the preservice teacher trainees.

Sample for the study:

A total of 136 preservice teachers have participated in survey where in 89 female and 47 male preservice teachers. These teachers are from science 86(63.3%) and humanities 50(36.8%) background. The sample included students from integrated programme B.A.B.Ed. 22(16.2%); B.Sc.B.Ed. 43(31.6%) and B.Ed. 71(52.2%) students.

Tools used in the study:

A questionnaire with both objective and open ended questions was prepared. Section A is a five-point rating scale with 30 statements on reflective journaling, its role in personal development & professional development. Positive statements were scored 5,4,3,2,1 for SA,A,UD,D,SD, and negative statements were score 1,2,3,4,5, for SA,A,UD,D,SD. Section B has open ended questions which the participants are expected to answer in their own.

Data collection:

The preservice teachers are administered a questionnaire to examine their perceptions on reflective journaling as a process. This questionnaire has both objective and descriptive questions. The preservice teachers wrote journals during the internship which was a 16 week period in the term. As this study intends to improve teachers' reflectivity along with revealing the current situation, their journals will be collected, analysed and feedback or guidance will be provided during this period.

The Preservice teachers who have participated in the internship programme in B.Ed. II year, B.Sc.B.Ed.III year and B.A. B.Ed, III year for the academic year 2023-24 were included in the study. They were oriented on reflective journalling and were asked to write weekly journals

referring to the reflection prompts that have been provided to them. In this study, reflection prompts – What have you done before the lesson? How did the lesson go (details)? What have you done after the lesson? Did you evaluate the lesson – were used to guide teachers’ reflection and to reveal their levels of reflectivity.

Analysis and interpretation of data

Perception of preservice teachers on reflective journaling

The results revealed that out of 136 teachers, majority i.e. 98(72.1%) of them were found to have moderate perception on reflective journalling, 17(12.5%) and 21(15.4%) of them fall in the high and low perceptions. This indicates that majority of the preservice teachers understand the importance and application of reflective journalling in general and its importance to personal and professional development in specific.

The perception scale consisted three sections; such as about the reflective journalling, personal development and professional development. The frequencies and percentages of the responses on the rating scale are calculated and tabulated below:

Table 1

Perceptions of preservice teachers on Reflective journaling

	Statement	SA	A	UD	D	SD
1	Reflective journaling is nothing but reporting what has happened in the class.	2(1.5%)	25 (18.4%)	09 (6.6%)	76 (55.9%)	24 (17.6%)
2	Reflective journaling is a beautiful concept to preach but its implementation is difficult	13(9.6%)	55(40.4%)	19(14%)	47(34.6%)	2(1.5%)
3	I feel writing reflective journal is the most boring task	6(4.4%)	17(12.5%)	15(11%)	83(61%)	15(11%)

4	Reflective journaling is all about relating theory with practice	11(8.1%)	46(33.8%)	24(17.6%)	36(26.5%)	19(14%)
5	I feel writing reflective journal gave me a voice to express my self	55(40.4%)	72(52.9%)	06(4.4%)	02(1.5%)	01(0.7%)
6	This practice is not suitable for students with limited writing ability	04(2.9%)	40(29.4%)	26(19.1%)	58(42.6%)	08(5.9%)

The table 1 revealed that the overall perception of the preservice teachers on reflective journaling is positive and perceived the very idea in a positive way. 100(73.5%) preservice teachers felt that reflective journaling is not just reporting what has happened in the class. 50% of them felt that it is a beautiful concept to preach but its implementation is difficult and remaining disagreed. 23(16.9%) preservice teachers found maintaining reflective journal is boring; on contrary majority of them disagree with the view. There is a mixed response, fifty percent of them expressed that it is all about relating theory with practice and is appreciated and remaining disagreed. 93.3% of them felt that writing journal gave them a voice to express and 48.5% felt that it is not suitable for students with limited writing ability.

When asked some of preservice teachers replied:

"I run short of vocabulary to describe and write every day. It is a boring exercise"

"I find it difficult to reflect and especially write it in the journal. I hate writing and feel that it is time waste."

"Writing and maintaining the journal was a challenge to me. In the initial days it was a punishment. Slowly I realized I could speak my mind honestly, reflect and work upon myself. I realized gradually that this practice not only helps in professional development but also in my personal growth and development".

Table 2

Professional development and reflective journaling

	Statement	SA	A	UD	D	SD
1	Reflective journaling takes a lot of time and increases my workload	9(6.6%)	36(26.5%)	25(18.4%)	60(44.1%)	06(4.4%)
2	Reflections facilitate in understanding whether the activities are successfully implemented	46(33.8%)	81(59.6%)	03(2.2%)	03(2.2%)	03(2.2%)
3	Revising the lesson in the light of reflections is not an appropriate decision even in the worst case.	05(3.7%)	20(14.7%)	47(34.6%)	50(36.8%)	14(10.3%)
4	Reflective journaling adds stress during my internship.	07(5.1%)	27(19.9%)	22(16.2%)	60(44.1%)	20(14.7%)
5	Reflective journal helps to know my teaching in a holistic way	48(35.3%)	73(53.7%)	11(8.1%)	04(2.9%)	00
6	Reflective journaling becomes a burden rather than helping me in my day to day teaching	05(3.7%)	18(13.2%)	19(14%)	73(53.7%)	21(15.4%)
7	Reflecting on one's own performance is must for any profession	65(47.8%)	63(46.3%)	06(4.4%)	01(0.7%)	01(0,7%)
8	Reflective journal opens the window to daily improvement in teaching learning process	55(40.4%)	71(52.2%)	06(4.4%)	04(2.9%)	00
9	The reflective journal helped me to know my shortcomings	51(37.5%)	72(52.9%)	09(6.6%)	03(2.2%)	01(0.7%)

	and improved my teaching to a greater extent.					
10	I can see the improvement i made in teaching due to the reflective journaling	45(33.1%)	78(57.4%)	07(5.1%)	05(3.7%)	01(0.7%)
11	Due to reflective journaling i am able to make on the spot corrective actions in the class	34(25%)	81(59.6%)	14(10.3%)	07(5.1%)	00
12	I feel feedback of peers and teachers work better than writing reflective journals	34(25%)	49(36%)	36(26.5%)	15(11%)	02(1.5%)

The table 2 represented the data regarding the extent reflective journaling facilitate professional development, and the responses indicated the following information:

Most (94%) of the participants expressed that Reflecting on one's own performance is a must for any profession; It helps their teaching a holistic in nature (89%) and 92.6% strongly agreed that it opens the window to daily improvement in teaching learning process. 93.4% expressed reflections facilitate in understanding whether the activities are successfully implemented; here as 90% of them indicated that the reflective journal helped them to know their shortcomings and improved their teaching to a greater extent.

33.1% of them felt that Reflective journaling takes a lot of time and increases workload and 18.4% of them agreed that revising the lesson in the light of reflections is not an appropriate decision even in the worst case where as the remaining disagreed. 25% of them also agreed to the statement “Reflective journaling adds stress during my internship”. 16.9% added and expressed it becomes a burden rather than helping them in their day-to-day teaching. With all these teachers who expressed their discomfort in maintaining the journal; most of them (80%) said that due to reflective journaling they are able to make on the spot corrective actions in the class and 61% participants felt that feedback of peers and teachers work better than writing reflective journals. Many of them said:

- ❖ *“Maintaining journal made me believe that there is always ‘Plan b’ and one has to act according to the time and context.”*
- ❖ *“I enjoyed writing my experience and learning from it. It’s a wonderful habit of having a dialogue, contemplate and take action. Self-learning is the best approach.”*

The open ended questions were qualitatively analysed and coded. The themes are identified and it is represented as sub heading and excerpts are given for more authenticity.

a. Benefits of Reflective Journaling

When asked about reflective journaling and its impact, the preservice teachers shared their experiences, which are given as excerpts, offering insights into the benefits they gained.

These excerpts clearly revealed that reflective journaling emerged as a valuable tool for preservice teachers, particularly in enhancing their content knowledge and delivery. Their responses illustrated how the reflective practice encouraged self-evaluation, and professional growth. One participant shared, *“Reflective journaling has helped me to know the odds in my content so, helped me to improve my content organization and it's effective delivery in the class, it also helped to realize that I need to include extra knowledge for gifted child of class”* another participant noted that *“Each day, I note which parts of the lesson went well and which didn't. This helped me to improve content delivery and make future lessons more engaging and effective. one shared that “reflective journaling has helped me to better understand and organize the content I teach. By reviewing each lesson afterward, I’ve been able to identify which parts were well-received and which areas need further clarification or improvement. This process has enhanced my content knowledge and improved the way I present information to my students.*

The reflective journaling helped the thinking pattern too as one participant shared “It not only enriched my content knowledge and content organisation but also improved my thinking style, personality and my day-to-day behaviour with others. Interestingly one participant gave elaborative response on classroom reflection. It goes like this “After a class on algebraic expressions, I noted in my journal that while most students could solve simpler equations, they struggled with questions involving multiple variables and signs. By reflecting on this, I identified two main issues: my initial explanation was too brief, and the students needed more examples that progressively increased in complexity. In response, I

adjusted my approach in the next class. I started with real-world examples related to variables, like calculating total expenses by assigning costs to items. I then gave step-by-step examples, emphasizing areas where mistakes were common.

The following excerpts capture the personal experiences of preservice teachers as they engaged with reflective journaling during their teaching practice. Their responses reveal how the process enhanced their instructional decision-making, content understanding, classroom management, and self-awareness.

- ❖ *“Reflecting and reviewing my performance helped me in taking decisions on the quantum of information to be covered; number & type of illustrations. Once I taught a chapter 2nd of 6th class named Diversity in living world while teaching that particular topic I felt that I can give more knowledge to students on particular topic so I studied more examples related to diversity in animals and plants and gave better content to students from the previous one”.*
- ❖ *“Maintaining a reflective journal allows us to evaluate the effectiveness of our material, adapt lessons based on student feedback, and incorporate new ideas and resources. Through reflection, pupil teachers can identify gaps in student understanding, ensure alignment with learning objectives, and foster personal growth in our subject matter”.*
- ❖ *“Reflective journaling allows for the assessment of what content was effective and engaging, and what needed improvement. For example, by journaling after each lesson, teachers can identify which areas of the curriculum students struggled with, prompting adjustments for clarity or reinforcement. This process can lead to improved lesson planning, deeper knowledge of subject matter, and a more tailored learning experience for students”.*
- ❖ *“After a lesson on Newton’s First Law of Motion for 9th class I noticed students struggled with applying the concept to real-life situations. Reflecting on this I realized the need for relatable examples, so I incorporated some real life examples and some demonstrations like a toy car demonstration to show inertia. In the next session, students understood the concept better, showing the impact of modifying content delivery based on reflection”.*
- ❖ *“I was facing problem with the time management in the class for which reflective journaling helped me tremendously. This practice made me more conscious and aware of the flow of content, how can I organize the content more efficiently”.*

- ❖ *“During one lesson on "The Mutiny of 1857" "class 8th" I realised that learners are finding it difficult to remember the location and contribution of important figures involved in the revolt. Reflecting afterward, I noted the need for visual and audio-visual aids. I could bring changes in my class gradually listening to mind. This enhanced student engagement and comprehension. It also improved my ability to gauge content difficulty and adapt resources for better understanding. It clarifies my thoughts, identifies patterns in my content, and encourages my critical thinking”.*

b. Identifying gaps in teaching and effective teaching

- ❖ *“It helped me to easily work on my loopholes and address the doubts of the students with efficiency leading to improved teaching practice .Reflective journaling helped me to improve my teaching practices as reflecting on myself I came to know about flaws I was doing in several teaching methods. Revisiting my previous experiences and the reflections I made in the journal made me realise that students are more interested in doing activity based method rather through lecture method”. “Due to the reflective Journalling, I could try to improve my teaching practices which include modulation of Voice, clear and systematic content flow, gestures, listening skills and presentation skills”.*
- ❖ *“Through journaling, I have become more aware of my teaching methods and strategies. After each session, I reflect on what worked well and what could be improved. This has led to a more dynamic and responsive approach to teaching, allowing me to adapt my strategies to better suit the learning styles of my students. I understood why teaching is called as reflective practice and teacher a reflective practitioner”.*

c. Improving Use of Blackboard , Visual Aids and better learning experiences

- ❖ *“At beginning of our internship, I was not able to use blackboard effectively. . But when one day while writing about this problem I remember about the words of my science professor who told us once to divide blackboard in two parts and then use one for drawing and other for writing important points. The next day I started using the board effectively. I even started making concept maps while drawing and teaching a concept”.*
- ❖ *“One instance that stands out was during a unit on chemical reactions, where I noticed that several students struggled with the abstract concepts and symbols used in chemical equations. After each lesson, I would write down my observations, reflecting on specific*

areas where students appeared disengaged or confused. My reflections helped me realize that I needed to approach the topic more visually and incorporate relatable, real-life examples that students could connect to their everyday experiences. As a result, I adapted my lesson plans to include more hands-on experiments, like demonstrating a vinegar and baking soda reaction to visualize gas formation, rather than solely relying on equations.”

d. Enhancing teacher-student relationships

- ❖ *“Reflect on building relationships with students and understanding their needs, fostering empathy, and honing communication skills. Teaching practice can be monitored if a journal is maintained. It helps in self reflection, monitoring the behaviour of the students, lesson evaluation and promotes more thoughtful and responsive approach to teaching.”*
- ❖ *“Reflective journaling offers insights into teaching methods and strategies. For instance, after observing students' reactions or engagement levels, a teacher might reflect on the delivery methods used (e.g., lecture, group work, hands-on activities). Journaling encourages considering alternative approaches to improve student comprehension and engagement, such as incorporating more interactive elements or adapting lessons to diverse learning styles”.*

e. Rethinking on instructional strategies

- ❖ *“During a lesson on acids and bases for 7th graders, I found that my explanation of pH indicators was too theoretical and students found it difficult to understand. In my journal, I realized that I need to plan and design experiences properly and leave my laziness. I decided and provided concrete experiences to students like using litmus paper and common kitchen items in the next class. I improved my class management skills and way of dealing with students of different standards. Reflecting and reviewing helped me in deciding on measures that I can take up like paying Individual attention, giving them chance to brainstorm, solving problems, providing real life examples and demonstration”.*

f. Classroom Management: Insights Gained Through Reflective Journaling

Reflective journaling served as a powerful tool in shaping my classroom management skills during teaching practice as responded by participants. *“By consistently recording classroom experiences and challenges, I was able to identify patterns in student behavior,*

analyze my responses, and develop strategies to create a more positive, respectful, and controlled learning environment”

g. Understanding student behaviour and needs

- ❖ *“Reflective journaling helped me to improve my classroom management skills as the atmosphere of the classroom differs daily so, dealing with different classroom atmosphere and writing about it daily helped me to think of better ideas and ways to maintain a positive atmosphere in the classroom”.*
- ❖ *“Reflecting on daily interactions allows me to understand students’ behavior better and refine my management techniques. This has helped me create a more positive classroom environment”.*
- ❖ *“I realized that it is my voice, communication skills, eye contact and listening skills which need to be improved and students need not be punished for the class disturbances”.*
- ❖ *“Journaling has been instrumental in improving my classroom management skills. By reflecting on incidents and student behavior, I have been able to identify patterns and adjust my management strategies. This has led to a more positive and controlled classroom environment, where students feel respected and engaged”.*
- ❖ *“I realized the importance of knowing the names of the students, their needs, likes and dislikes, learning styles when I analysed my performance”*
- ❖ *“Through the reflective journal it is possible that we know about our mistakes that had happened in the class and we should plan that mistakes will not happen again in the classroom”.*
- ❖ *“One specific instance that stands out involved a challenging group of students who often disrupted lessons, making it difficult for the entire class to focus. Initially, I felt frustrated and unsure of how to create a more productive learning environment. However, through consistent reflective journaling, I was able to analyze my interactions with these students and evaluate my responses to their behavior After one particularly disruptive class, I journalled about the sequence of events: what led to the disruptions, how I responded, and the resulting impact on the students. This process helped me see*

patterns in both their actions and my own. I realized that I was often reacting emotionally to their behavior, which inadvertently encouraged more disruption”.

h. Adapting and improving classroom management skills

- ❖ *“The reflection of last class made me conscious of my teaching skills and improve it in order to manage class more professionally”*
- ❖ *“On starting days it is very difficult to manage the class but slowly when I start writing the reflective journal I found just become angry on students doesn't make my class managed so slowly I understand the each and every students , understand there individual need with this I'm able to manage my classroom”.*
- ❖ *“In the starting days I was unable to manage the class but by the time it was improved by writing reflective journal daily, like backbenchers always got me in trouble by disturbing the class but now I can easily handle the class”.*
- ❖ *“Reflective journaling provides an opportunity to consider classroom management techniques and their outcomes. By reflecting on instances of both effective and challenging classroom dynamics, teachers can adjust their strategies. For example, if certain rules or routines aren't producing the desired behavior, journaling can prompt a teacher to try new approaches, like seating arrangements or incentive systems, thereby refining overall management skills”.*
- ❖ *“I had trouble managing the students who had already studied the content I was teaching and kept disturbing in maths classes. After reflecting, I started giving HOTS questions to such students”.*
- ❖ *“I recorded my students thoughts , experiences and interactions to gain insight into their learning and reflected on my observations. This helped me identify the methods suitable for maintaining classroom discipline and constant engagement and attention of the learners”.*
- ❖ *“During a lively social science activity, a few learners became overly excited, making it challenging to maintain control. Journaling afterward helped me realize that my instructions had been too vague. For future activities, I established clearer guidelines and a signal for attention. I learned to anticipate potential disruptions and introduced clear instructions to maintain order without stifling enthusiasm”.*

- ❖ *“I improved my class management skills and also improved and enhanced my way of dealing with students of different standards with different attitude and way instead of dealing with all of them in the same way”.*

i. Interpersonal Growth and Relationship Building through Reflective Journaling

- ❖ *“Reflective journal made me work on my personal loopholes by critically analysing the different situations happening in my everyday routine. Writing reflective journal made me more patient to efficiently deal with the arguments and maintain cordial relations with students, school teachers and other internship”.*
- ❖ *“Reflective journaling is a good way of reflecting on oneself behaviour towards others and help us to find a way to deal with the odds and the ways to improve myself and my behavior towards the students like it helped to give more positive reinforcement to students, cheering my peers and do improved my behavior”.*
- ❖ *“By reflecting on my interactions, I’ve become more aware of my tone and attitude, which has led to more respectful and supportive relationships with students, colleagues, and interns”.*
- ❖ *“Reflective journaling has allowed me to analyze my interactions with students, teachers, and interns. Reflecting on these relationships has helped me develop better communication skills and become more empathetic. I am now more mindful of how my behavior impacts others, leading to a more collaborative and respectful environment”.*
- ❖ *“Reflective journaling also helped me when collaborating with fellow science teachers. After the lesson, I shared my reflections and adjustments with my colleagues, and they provided feedback that further enriched my teaching practice. Their insights, along with my own reflections, led to more collaborative planning and better teaching outcomes”.*
- ❖ *“Reflective journal made me behave more polite to my students because while writing the reflective journal I felt that good behaviour towards other is the only way you can modify the behaviour of other person or your students so I try to never scold my students, reflective journal encourage me to after every lesson inculcate moral values among students so that they become good citizen For example in chapter of diversity in the living world,I inculcate the values that they should respect the biodiversity and protect them”.*

- ❖ *“It changed my behaviour completely towards students, in the starting days I was quite strict and rude with students but after few weeks I realised that I was wrong and all credits goes to writing reflective journal daily. Thank you”.*
- ❖ *“It helps us to recognise the behaviour of the students and see the pattern of the class. It also helps in management of the school and collaborating with the teachers and even the other interns. If we keep a reflective journal it helps in the coordination with the school and maintain the teamwork”.*
- ❖ *“Teachers can assess interactions with students, peers, and other staff, identifying areas for empathy, patience, and communication. For instance, journaling about interactions with students may reveal biases or ineffective responses, leading to more thoughtful, supportive communication. Similarly, reflecting on collaborations with other teachers can encourage a more cooperative and open attitude, improving workplace relationships and fostering a supportive school environment”.*
- ❖ *“Understand how students learn best and be accountable for their progress , in building a good relationship with the students, creating a critical environment for other teachers to reflect on my teaching methods”*
- ❖ *“During a collaborative project with other interns on natural indicators, I found myself taking on too much of the task, unintentionally sidelining my peers. Through journaling, I recognized this tendency and worked on becoming more collaborative, actively inviting others to share ideas. This shift led to a more balanced teamwork dynamic and stronger rapport with fellow interns”.*
- ❖ *“Reflective journal in reality is all about writing your experiences but I think improvement can be done only through experiences , we all are at certain age that we know what is right or wrong and if we did mistakes we realized it on the spot”.*
- ❖ *“Initially I felt hesitant when discussing class issues with senior teachers, unsure of their openness to my ideas. After journaling my apprehensions, I actively sought advice on handling specific students. This led to valuable mentorship relationships that improved my teaching practice”.*
- ❖ *“I appreciate myself to improve my interpersonal relationship with school teachers / students and interns of my same age group, Improved formal communication with co-teachers and students”.*

- ❖ *“I have started dealing with the staff and other members with more calmness and have improved my listening abilities. I have also improved my communication skills which helps in explaining my side of the story”.*
- ❖ *“By maintaining reflective journal I introspected myself and tried to behave politely and formally with others. It helped me in Conflict resolution, improved communication, increases self awareness and promoting a positive school culture”.*

Table 3

Reflective journaling and its impact on personal development

	Statement	SA	A	UD	D	SD
1	It gives opportunity to understand my strengths and weaknesses	47(34.6%)	79(58.1%)	03(2.2%)	06(4.4%)	01(7%)
2	Habit of writing reflections helps in bringing responsibility for ones own actions	35(25.7%)	84(61.8%)	15(11%)	01(0.7%)	01(0.7%)
3	Reflective journaling made me conscious of my own feelings and emotions & helped me in dealing with myself and others effectively	41(30.1%)	77(56.6%)	12(8.8%)	04(2.9%)	02(1.5%)
4	Reflective journal helps me monitor my own learning	38(27.9%)	85(62.5%)	08(5.9%)	05(3.7%)	00
5	The urge to continuously record and evaluate my teaching experiences becomes overburdened.	17(12.5%)	37(27.2%)	25(18.4%)	51(37.5%)	06(4.4%)
6	I am able to make pro active decisions due to reflective journaling	17(12.5%)	83(61%)	23(16.9%)	12(8.8%)	01(0.7%)

7	The reflective journaling enhanced my problem solving skills	28(20.6%)	83(61%)	13(9.6%)	11(8.1%)	01(0.7%)
8	Reflective journaling influenced my ability to manage stress	22(16.2%)	78(57.4%)	22(16.2%)	11(8.1%)	03(2.2%)
9	Maintaining journals reduces confidence levels as you keep writing things	06(4.4%)	29(21.3%)	21(15.4%)	59(43.4%)	21(15.4%)
10	My goals become more clear, definable and attainable when I write reflective journal daily.	31(22.8%)	90(66.2%)	08(5.9%)	05(3.7%)	02(1.5%)
11	Reflective journaling helps in improvement of self criticism skills	37(27.2%)	88(64.7%)	05(3.7%)	03(2.2%)	03(2.2%)
12	I lost confidence in facing emotional challenges as a result of reflective journalling.	03(2.2%)	18(13.2%)	31(22.8%)	62(45.6%)	22 (16.2%)

The table 3 offers data on how the reflective journaling practices help in personal development.

The data and narrative responses of open ended questions are analysed, coded and the themes identified are presented under different sub headings.

j. Strengthening Critical Thinking and Reflective Action

- ❖ *“Reflective journaling has improved my problem-solving and decision-making skills by allowing me to analyze challenging classroom situations and consider alternative approaches. Writing down these experiences helps me think critically about my choices and develop more effective solutions for future situations”.*
- ❖ *“One day science teacher instructed us that I have to manage the science exhibition next day. I wasn't mentally prepared, I had to decide the time , venue and even jury for the programme. While writing all this in my journal I suddenly got ideas and everything had fallen in place and could manage perfectly and exhibition was held smoothly”.*

- ❖ *“I noticed that many students struggled with solving word problems, especially in topics like simple equations. After each class, I would reflect in my journal, noting which specific concepts seemed challenging for them and analyzing possible reasons behind their struggles. Through this process, I recognized a pattern: students often got confused because they didn't fully understand the real-world context in the word problems or how to translate the words into mathematical expressions. Reflecting on this insight, I decided to experiment with a new approach. I began incorporating more step-by-step scaffolding into my lessons. For example, I broke down word problems into smaller components, first focusing on identifying keywords that suggested specific operations, then practicing translating sentences into equations before trying to solve them. Each day, I reflected on how students responded to this modified approach, noting improvements and remaining challenges” It enhances one's reflexes and improves mindfulness while teaching. It provides shortcomings which can be improved later on in the next class”.*

k. Finding Creative Solutions

- ❖ *“It helps in reflecting upon the problem we deal in the class, identifying root causes, choosing appropriate diagnostic tools, and applying systematic methodologies to resolve issues efficiently”.*
- ❖ *“Through reflective journaling, teachers can record and review instances where they faced challenges or had to make quick decisions in the classroom. By analyzing these situations, teachers can identify patterns in their decision-making processes, evaluate the effectiveness of their responses, and brainstorm better solutions for similar future scenarios. This practice fosters a mindset of continuous improvement and proactive problem-solving”.*

l. Instructional Decisions Based on Student Needs

- ❖ *“When faced with a group of students frequently interrupting discussions in a class 10th heredity lesson, I initially struggled to maintain focus. Journaling allowed me to process this challenge and brainstorm solutions. I introduced structured discussion rules and assigned leadership roles to students, which helped manage interruptions and encouraged focused participation”.*
- ❖ *“I encountered a situation where a learner used to run away from my English class. My initial reaction was to talk to him and explain the importance of education for his growth.*

While reflecting on this situation later in the evening, I realised the need to understand the reason behind him doing this. Next day I personally asked him the reason. It turned out that whenever he tried to read English in the classroom, others laughed at his pronunciation. I then managed to convince him to just sit in my class. I focused on language comprehension and incorporating moral lessons from the stories and poems in my classroom. One day he voluntarily read a paragraph. When others laughed at him, I reminded them of the moral lessons we discussed in the earlier classes and used positive reinforcement by appreciating that specific learner. Soon some of his peers, took up this responsibility to make him read some paragraphs in a small group. This encouraged his participation in the classroom and collaboration as well as cooperation between the learners”.

The investigator analysed the differences in perceptions of preservice teachers with special reference to gender, subject taught and type of teacher education program and represented in table 4.

Table 4

The data and results of differences in perceptions of preservice teachers

Variable	Groups	N	Mean	S.D.	t value	Sig
Gender	Female	89	110.92	13.39	.061	.952
	Male	47	110.77	15.53		
Subject taught	Science	86	111.91	15.29	1.127	.262
	Humanities	50	109.08	11.74		
Programme	Integrated B.Ed	65	111.29	12.13	.335	.738
	B.Ed.	71	110.48	15.79		

From the table 4 it is evident that there is no significant difference in the perceptions of preservice teachers on reflective journaling and its use with respect to their gender, subject taught and type of teacher education programme. In other words, all the preservice teachers are having similar perceptions on reflective journaling irrespective of gender, subject taught and type of teacher education program.

Major findings of the study

- **Majority of preservice teachers hold a moderate to positive perception** on reflective journalling. Out of 136 preservice teachers, 72.1% demonstrated a moderate perception, while 12.5% and 15.4% held high and low perceptions respectively. This suggests an overall positive attitude towards reflective journaling as a pedagogical tool.
- **Reflective journaling supports professional growth:** Many preservice teachers reported that journaling helped them identify gaps in content knowledge and delivery. It allowed them to modify and improve their teaching strategies, making lessons more effective and student-centered.
- **It enhances instructional decision-making:** Through reflection, participants were able to assess what worked in class and what didn't, leading to more informed instructional choices. This process improved lesson planning and adaptability during teaching.
- **Improved classroom management:** Reflective journaling enabled teachers to identify patterns in student behavior and their own responses. As a result, they adopted more effective classroom management techniques and created a more positive learning environment.
- **Helps relate theory to practice:** About 50% of the participants agreed that reflective journaling bridges the gap between theoretical learning and practical application. This reinforced the role of reflective practice in connecting academic training with real classroom experiences.
- **Supports self-awareness and emotional regulation:** Teachers reported improved patience, communication, and empathy after journaling regularly. It helped them respond thoughtfully rather than reactively in challenging classroom situations.
- **Positive impact on student-teacher relationships:** Reflective practice led to better understanding of student needs, enhanced empathy, and improved interpersonal interactions. Many teachers reported becoming more approachable, respectful, and student-friendly.
- **Initial resistance gives way to appreciation:** Though some participants found the process burdensome or boring initially, many eventually recognized its long-term value. They saw reflective journaling as essential for both personal and professional development.

- **Encourages creative problem-solving:** Journaling helped teachers identify root causes of classroom issues and reflect on alternative solutions. This led to more confident decision-making and innovative instructional approaches.
- While reflective journaling was generally valued, about 61% of participants felt peer and teacher feedback worked better in some cases. This highlights the need for a balanced approach to reflective practice.

Conclusion:

The study aimed to explore the perceptions of preservice teachers about reflective journaling practices and examine how the practice influenced their teaching competencies, classroom management, and personal development. The objectives included understanding the benefits, challenges, and overall impact of reflective journaling on instructional decision-making and professional growth. The findings revealed that a significant majority of participants held a moderate to high perception of reflective journaling, recognizing it as a tool that bridges the gap between theory and practice. Most participants reported that journaling helped them evaluate their teaching strategies, improve content delivery, and reflect on classroom experiences more critically and constructively.

Although some preservice teachers expressed initial discomfort such as citing challenges like time consumption, writing difficulties, and added stress to write daily the reflective journals but many eventually embraced reflective journaling as a meaningful and transformative process. It not only enhanced their teaching practices but also positively influenced their classroom management skills, behavior with students, and interactions with peers and mentors. The reflections revealed deep insights into how journaling fostered empathy, adaptability, and continuous self-improvement. Overall, the study highlighted that reflective journaling is an effective pedagogical tool for nurturing reflective practitioners and promoting holistic professional development in teacher education.

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