

Reflective Practice

in English Language Teaching



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PREFACE

All praise is due to Allah, the Most Gracious and Most Merciful, who has granted us knowledge, guidance, and the opportunity to learn and teach. May blessings and peace be upon our beloved Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), the perfect teacher and guide for all humankind.

Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) is both a science and an art. It requires not only understanding the structures of the language but also knowing how learners acquire, process, and use English in meaningful contexts. This book is designed to guide pre-service and in-service teachers through the essential components of TEFL, providing practical insights, theoretical foundations, and classroom applications.

The content is organized into twelve comprehensive units covering key areas of English language teaching: understanding teachers, learners, and the journey to becoming an effective EFL teacher; classroom management; teaching receptive skills such as listening and reading; teaching productive skills including speaking, writing, and pronunciation; developing language systems such as grammar, vocabulary, and functions; integrating teaching strategies with assessment, evaluation, and testing; incorporating technology and media in the classroom; fostering learner autonomy; addressing individual differences; applying materials design; and implementing action-oriented learning approaches. Each unit includes theoretical explanations, practical examples, and suggested activities to enhance both understanding and practice.

This book emphasizes the importance of student-centered and communicative approaches, encouraging learners to become active participants in their language development. It also highlights the role of teachers in creating a positive and inclusive learning environment, assessing learners effectively, and reflecting on their teaching practices.

We hope this book serves as a valuable resource for aspiring and practicing English teachers, helping them develop the knowledge, skills, and confidence needed to teach English effectively and creatively. The goal is not only to produce grammatically competent learners but also to nurture authentic communicators who can use English meaningfully in real-life contexts.

We extend our gratitude to Allah for His guidance, and to all educators, researchers, and students who contributed ideas and feedback during the development of this book. May this book inspire and support your journey in the dynamic and rewarding field of TEFL.

Ponorogo, 6 Desember 2024

Author,

Dr. Dhinuk Puspita Kirana, M.Pd

DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to all teachers and learners of English around the world. To those who are curious, who embrace mistakes, and who persevere — may your journey in learning and teaching be filled with meaning, joy, and endless discovery.

To my beloved mother & father, my beloved husband, my beloved beautiful daughters, and my beloved ABC sisters, whose unwavering love, support, and prayers have been my guiding light and greatest inspiration.

To my students, past and present, whose questions, creativity, and dedication continue to inspire and remind me of the true purpose of teaching.

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UNIT 1

TEACHERS, LEARNERS AND BECOMING AN EFL TEACHER

A. Sub-Course Learning Outcomes

The expected learning outcomes at each stage (Sub-Course Learning Outcomes / Sub-CPMK 1): Students are able to demonstrate an in-depth understanding of Teachers, Learners and Becoming an EFL Teacher

B. Quote of the Unit

“Good teachers care more about their students’ learning than about their own teaching.”

— *Jeremy Harmer*

Jeremy Harmer: an English language teaching expert, author, and teacher trainer, widely known for his influential works such as *The Practice of English Language Teaching* and *How to Teach English*.

Meaning: It teaches that the essence of being a good EFL teacher lies not in teaching performance, but in a sincere concern for students’ learning development.

C. Critical Thinking / Pre-Teaching Questions (Bloom’s Taxonomy)

1. (Analyze)

What are the main differences between a *teacher-centered* and a *learner-centered* classroom, and how do these differences affect students’ engagement in learning English?

2. (Evaluate)

In your opinion, what qualities make an English teacher truly effective — language proficiency, classroom management, empathy, or creativity? Why?

3. (Analyze)

How do your past learning experiences as a student influence the way you imagine yourself as a future English teacher?

4. (Evaluate)

Some teachers believe that strict discipline ensures effective learning, while others emphasize building close relationships with students. Which approach do you think is more beneficial for EFL learners, and why?

5. (Create)

Imagine you are designing your own English class for junior high school students. What would your ideal learning environment look like, and how would you position yourself as a teacher in that class?

D. Overview of the Unit**1. Why Teachers and Learners Matter in EFL**

Teaching and learning are mutually constitutive: the teacher's role, beliefs, and professional identity shape what and how learners learn; learners' needs, motivations, and backgrounds shape what teachers do in the classroom. As H. Douglas Brown summarizes, *"Teaching is helping learners learn; learning is the process of acquiring or getting knowledge of a subject or a skill through study, experience, or instruction."* This definition highlights that teaching is inseparable from understanding learners' ways of constructing meaning.

Jeremy Harmer's well-known remark—*"Good teachers care more about their students' learning than about their own teaching"*—reminds us that teacher effectiveness is measured primarily by student learning and development, not the teacher's performance per se. Likewise, David Nunan argues that learners are active constructors of knowledge rather than empty vessels; they bring varied experiences, strategies, and identities into the classroom, and effective pedagogy must take that diversity into account.

2. Core Competences of an EFL Teacher: Knowledge, Skills, Values

Becoming an EFL teacher is more than mastering grammar explanations. Core domains include:

1. **Language competence** – accurate control of pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary and pragmatic use.
2. **Pedagogical knowledge** – methods, lesson design, assessment literacy, classroom management.
3. **Learner knowledge** – awareness of learner differences, needs analysis, motivation and affect.
4. **Technological literacy (TPACK)** – ability to integrate technology meaningfully with pedagogy and content.
5. **Professional identity and ethics** – reflective orientation, continuous development, cultural sensitivity.

Mishra & Koehler's TPACK framework remains central for 21st-century teaching: *effective tech use requires knowing technology, pedagogy, and content—and how they interact*. Recent systematic reviews show a steady rise of TPACK research in English language teaching, and evidence that TPACK-oriented training improves teachers' instructional design and use of digital tools when combined with reflective practice.

3. Teacher Identity: How EFL Teachers Become Who They Are

Teacher identity is dynamic and socially constructed. Contemporary reviews of EFL professional identity emphasize that identity develops through interaction, emotion, institutional contexts, and critical incidents (e.g., successes, conflicts, technological shifts). Studies from 2018–2023 indicate teacher identity is especially affected by online/hybrid teaching contexts (e.g., during/after COVID-19), emotional labor, and opportunities for collaborative reflection; these factors influence teachers' sense of agency and their classroom decisions.

Implication: teacher education should not only teach methods but also provide identity-building experiences—supervised practicum, mentoring, reflective groups, and opportunities to navigate real classroom dilemmas.

4. Reflective Practice: Theory and Recent Evidence

Classic foundations: Donald Schön's *reflective practitioner* (reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action) and Dewey's experiential reflection still form the theoretical backbone. Reflective practice transforms isolated lessons into learning opportunities for teachers: recording what happened, analyzing causes, and planning changes.

Recent empirical studies (Indonesia and beyond, 2020–2024) report that structured reflective routines—such as guided journals, peer observation with structured rubrics, and video-based self-analysis—lead to measurable improvements in teaching behaviors and sometimes in student outcomes. For example, Indonesian EFL studies in 2023–2024 documented that teachers who regularly used reflective journals and peer feedback reported improved lesson planning, more learner-centered activities, and greater agility in handling classroom problems. These studies likewise recommend institutional supports (protected time for reflection; mentoring) for sustainability.

A quasi-experimental study (recent trend internationally) also suggests structured reflective practice can improve learners' engagement and performance when teachers use reflection to adapt instructions and assessments. While effect sizes vary by context and rigor of study, the consistent trend across recent work is that reflection—paired with feedback and practical tools—supports teacher development and more responsive teaching.

5. TPACK and Technology in EFL (Recent Findings)

Technology is no longer optional. Recent systematic reviews (2017–2021+) and 2022–2024 bibliometric analyses highlight growing evidence that:

- Teachers with higher TPACK design more interactive and differentiated lessons.
- TPACK training that is contextualized to EFL (showing task-technology-pedagogy alignment) is more likely to change classroom practices than general tech training.
- Barriers remain: lack of institutional support, digital inequality among learners, and teachers' initial techno-anxiety.

Implication: teacher preparation should include hands-on TPACK tasks (designing a lesson with a chosen tool for a real learning outcome) plus reflective logs that focus on how technology changed student learning.

6. **Learner Characteristics and “Good Language Learners”: Recent Local Studies**

What makes a “good language learner” today? Contemporary Indonesian and regional studies (2020–2024) identify several consistent traits:

- **Consistent practice and perseverance** (regular speaking/reading/writing).
- **Use of strategies** (notice-taking, vocabulary learning routines, self-monitoring).
- **Willingness to take risks** (speaking despite errors).
- **Use of technology for learning** (self-access resources, apps, online communities).
- **Metacognitive awareness** (planning, monitoring, evaluating one’s own learning).

Teachers who nurture these traits—through strategy instruction, scaffolding, and opportunities for authentic communication—help learners become more autonomous and resilient.

7. ***Practical Implications for Teacher Education (Integrating Theory & Research)***

Based on classical theory and recent research, the following program features are recommended for an EFL teacher education course:

1. **Integrate reflective tasks into every practical assignment** (guided journals, video analysis, structured peer observation). Empirical studies show these increase transfer from training to practice.
2. **Teach TPACK through authentic lesson design tasks**, not only workshops—ask pre-service teachers to produce a tech-enhanced lesson and reflect on learning gains.
3. **Support identity work**: assign narratives, critical incident analyses, and group discussions where trainees articulate values

and dilemmas. Recent identity research emphasizes the role of emotional reflection and community in forming teacher agency.

4. **Explicitly teach learner strategies** and scaffold their application in classroom tasks (modeling, think-alouds, strategy journals). Local studies show this is valued by learners and aligns with “good learner” traits.

8. **Tips — What Makes a Good EFL TEACHER? (Practical, research-informed)**

Below are concise, practical tips drawn from classical wisdom and reinforced by recent research:

1. **Be learner-centered:** prioritize student learning goals, adapt activities to learner profiles. (Harmer; Brown)
2. **Reflect regularly and structurally:** use a guided journal template (what happened / why it worked/didn't / next steps). Research shows structured reflection yields better improvements than ad-hoc reflection.
3. **Use TPACK intentionally:** choose technologies that align with the pedagogical aim—don't use tech for its own sake. Recent reviews emphasize alignment tasks in teacher prep.
4. **Cultivate emotional intelligence:** be empathetic, build rapport, manage the emotional climate (teacher identity studies highlight emotion's role).
5. **Be a role model for lifelong learning:** show your own learning (read, take courses, share learning), and invite students into that process. (Richards & Farrell)
6. **Foster learner autonomy:** teach strategies explicitly, give choices, and provide scaffolded opportunities to practice them. (Recent learner-characteristics studies).
7. **Seek feedback and mentorship:** peer observation with structured rubrics and mentor debriefs accelerate growth. (Indonesian reflective practice studies).

9. **Tips — What Makes a Good LANGUAGE LEARNER? (Practical guidance for students)**

1. **Be consistent:** short daily practice beats sporadic long sessions. Recent studies highlight perseverance as key.

2. **Use varied strategies:** vocabulary notebooks, spaced repetition, shadowing for pronunciation, speaking clubs for fluency.
3. **Embrace mistakes:** treat errors as data for improvement—reflect on them.
4. **Use technology wisely:** apps, authentic content, online exchanges—integrate with in-class tasks.
5. **Develop metacognition:** plan goals, monitor progress, evaluate strategies; keep a short learning log. (Good learner studies).

10. Short Case Example (Applied Reflective Cycle)

Scenario: A trainee teacher uses a group jigsaw reading task; students were disengaged and few spoke.

Reflective sequence:

- *Describe:* Few students participated; time ran out.
- *Analyze:* Task instructions may have been unclear; home-group accountability was weak.
- *Plan:* Next lesson add modeling, checking comprehension, and assign explicit roles with evidence of contribution.
- *Act:* Implement next week; record and compare participation data.

This small cycle—grounded in Schön/Dewey and validated by research on reflective routines—illustrates immediate actionable steps that change classroom practices.

E. Conclusion

Becoming an effective EFL teacher is a developmental journey that combines language mastery, pedagogy, reflective habits, technological competence, and a resilient professional identity. Contemporary research (2015–2024) strengthens the evidence base for structured reflection and contextualized TPACK training, while local studies on learner characteristics remind us to design culturally and contextually appropriate approaches. When teacher education integrates identity work, reflective practice, and authentic design tasks, pre-service teachers are far better prepared to create classrooms where learners thrive.

Practical Tips for Good Teachers

1. **Establish Clear Expectations Early** – State classroom norms collaboratively with students to promote ownership and accountability.
2. **Model Positive Behavior** – Demonstrate respect, empathy, and enthusiasm, as students often mirror teacher attitudes (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009).
3. **Foster Emotional Safety** – Use encouragement and constructive feedback; avoid public criticism.
4. **Be Culturally Responsive** – Incorporate examples, names, and materials reflecting students' backgrounds (Siwatu et al., 2022).
5. **Integrate Technology Mindfully** – Use tools that promote engagement and interaction, not distraction (Bond, 2021).

Practical Tips for Good Students

1. **Respect the Learning Environment** – Arrive prepared and contribute positively to discussions.
2. **Be Self-Regulated** – Manage time, emotions, and learning strategies independently.
3. **Communicate Openly** – Ask questions, express opinions respectfully, and seek help when needed.
4. **Collaborate with Peers** – Share ideas and support group learning dynamics.
5. **Embrace Lifelong Learning** – View classroom management as a shared responsibility between teachers and learners.

F. Group Discussion and Presentation Guide

Purpose

This activity aims to help students explore the complex relationship between teachers and learners and to develop reflective understanding of what it means to become an effective EFL (English as a Foreign Language) teacher. Students will analyze real-life cases, evaluate teaching attitudes, and propose strategies for effective learning.

Group Discussion Prompts (Pre-Presentation)

Each group discusses the following prompts and prepares short notes for presentation.

1. Teacher Identity and Roles

- What makes an EFL teacher different from other subject teachers?
- How do beliefs, experiences, and personality influence a teacher's identity and teaching style?
- Discuss whether a teacher should be more of a *knowledge giver* or a *facilitator of learning*.

2. Learner Diversity

- How do cultural backgrounds, motivation, and learning styles affect students' engagement in EFL classrooms?
- What can teachers do to accommodate diverse learner needs while maintaining lesson objectives?

3. Becoming a Reflective Teacher

- What does it mean to be a *reflective practitioner*?
- How can reflection help teachers improve their classroom performance and adapt to students' needs?

4. Effective Learning Environment

- What kind of classroom atmosphere supports both learning and emotional well-being?
- How can teachers balance discipline with empathy and flexibility?

5. Teacher-Learner Relationship

- Discuss how mutual respect and trust influence language learning outcomes.
- How can teachers build positive rapport with learners in different contexts (e.g., rural vs. urban schools, large vs. small classes)?

Presentation Tasks (Per Group)

Each group prepares a **10-minute presentation** based on their discussion. Include the following elements:

1. Key Ideas Summary

Present 2–3 main points from your discussion (supported by examples or short case studies).

2. Theory Connection

Link your ideas to at least one theory or concept from scholars such as Jeremy Harmer, H. Douglas Brown, or Jack Richards.

Example: “According to Harmer (2007), effective teachers balance authority with approachability, creating an atmosphere where learners feel safe to participate.”

3. Reflection Element

Include 1–2 reflective questions for the audience, such as:

- “Have you ever been inspired by a teacher’s way of giving feedback?”
- “What kind of teacher would you like to become, and why?”

4. Visual/Creative Component

Use a short role-play, poster, slide, or infographic to illustrate your points.

G. Assessment Criteria (Mini Rubric)

Criteria	Excellent (4)	Good (3)	Fair (2)	Needs Improvement (1)
Understanding of concept	Demonstrates deep and critical understanding	Shows clear understanding	Shows partial understanding	Shows minimal understanding
Collaboration	Equal contribution and teamwork	Mostly collaborative	Uneven participation	Poor collaboration
Theoretical connection	Effectively connects ideas with relevant theory	Connects ideas with limited depth	Minimal theory use	No theoretical connection
Presentation clarity	Clear, engaging, and well-organized	Mostly clear	Some unclear parts	Difficult to follow
Reflection and creativity	Highly reflective and original	Reflective	Limited reflection	No reflection

H. References

Classic & foundational works

- Brown, H. D. (2007). *Principles of Language Learning and Teaching* (5th ed.). Pearson Education.
- Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Continuum.
- Harmer, J. (2007). *The Practice of English Language Teaching* (4th ed.). Pearson Longman.