



The Role of Reflective Journal in Explanatory Text Writing

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ABSTRACT

Keywords:

Reflective Journal;
Explanatory Text;
Text Writing.

Reflective journals are used as self-reflection tool to improve the quality of learning. Students can record their learning process through reflective journals so that they can find out their strengths and weaknesses while studying and are able to choose the right strategy to improve their learning, especially in learning to write explanatory texts. This study aims to describe the role of reflective journals in monitoring the writing process of explanatory text. This type of research is quantitative research using correlational methods. A total of 63 students were randomly selected to work on writing tasks which were monitored using reflective journals. Their responses indicated that reflective journals influenced their motivation, self-confidence, and improved learning. They feel the value and comfort of using a reflective journal while completing writing assignments. This result is directly proportional to the statistical test performed. By using the product-moment correlation test, it shows that the relationship between the reflective journal variable and the ability to write explanatory text is significant and very strong based on the correlation value, namely: 0.828. The use of reflective journals affects the ability to write explanatory texts by 68.6% and the remaining 31.4% is influenced by other variables. These results indicate that reflective journals play a very important role in monitoring the writing process. The role of reflective journals in writing, namely: as a means of self-reflection, a guide as well as a means of recording writing experiences; as a tool to cultivate metacognition and cover up weaknesses in writing; as a tool to increase awareness about cognition, tasks, and self in writing; as a guideline for using the right strategy in writing because they know their strengths and weaknesses in writing; as a tool to organize learning in an effort to complete writing assignments; and as a tool that forms a habit of writing, starting from planning, setting goals, and proper strategies for completing tasks.



Article History:

Received: 17-05-2024
Revised : 13-07-2024
Accepted: 17-07-2024
Online : 01-08-2024



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<https://doi.org/10.31764/ijeca.v7i2.23511>

A. INTRODUCTION

Reflective journals as a means of self-reflection and self-expression have been widely used in various countries, such as Hongkong, Iran, Japan, Uganda, Nigeria, Lithuania, USA, Indonesia, and other countries (Gillis, 2001). Writing reflective journals is also used in various disciplines, for example, psychology (Kelley et al., 2015), sociology, education, mathematics (Hashemi & Mirzaei, 2015), science (Al-Rawahi & Al-Balushi, 2015), chemistry (Cengiz, 2015), biology (Ige & Adu, 2016), athletics (Walker, 2006), health Sciences (Gillis, 2001); (Chur-hansen, n.d.), applied science or engineering (Estrada et al., 2014), and for sex education (Or, 2018). Reflective journals are also

used as alternative assessments in music classes (Williams, n.d.). In fact, reflective journals can help the welfare of social workers because for them writing is a healing therapy (Monk, 2011). Reflective journals are increasingly used because it is considered as the most useful tools to enhance learning and improve reflection skills (Chur-hansen, n.d.), students' critical thinking skills (Xhaferi & Xhaferi, 2017), increase student confidence and motivation (Amirkhanova et al., 2016), learning achievement (Ige & Adu, 2016), make it easy for students to learn new concepts (Mansor, 2011).

Reflective journals in school-based and educational contexts have the potential to develop teacher effectiveness both in pre-service and service contexts and become a worthy asset in all school contexts. Reflective journals can develop teacher leadership and teaching skills (Göker, 2016). Reflective journals are also used to improve teacher quality. Pre-service teachers who write reflective journals during their practice at school will show good quality because they have reflected on themselves during the practice (Ezati et al., 2010). By using reflective journals, pre-service teachers can improve their self-reflection skills (Cengiz et al., 2014), and his work-performance (Cengiz, 2015), in the chemistry laboratory. In addition, it also improves the reflection skills of EFL teachers in the learning process in the classroom (Afzali, 2018)(Khanjani et al., 2018).

Aside from being a reflection tool for teachers, reflective journals can also help the development of the teaching profession, for example in efforts to apply the concepts of teacher training and increase self-awareness of their teaching (Ukrop et al., 2019). As for students, journals can help them review their experiences and reflect on their actions (Evans & Maloney, 1998). Both students and teachers, use reflective journals to evaluate learning, diagnose problems, and solve problems (Insuasty et al., 2010). If the teacher and students have both used reflective journals as appropriate in the learning process, then a social relationship will be built between the teacher and students in the learning process (Al-karasneh, 2014). In order for reflective journals to be useful for students and teachers in meeting institutional goals and programs, reflective journals need to be used by students starting from when they are in their first year of education (Everett, 2013). Given its role in the development of critical thinking and the analytical abilities of its authors, reflective writing has begun to function in many research activities (Jasper, 2005). Reflective writing is used as an additional data source in qualitative research.

Reflective journals are generally used as a tool to continue competence, overcome gaps between theory and practice, and to provide learning notes arising from students' reflections about their learning practices (Gillis, 2001). Reflection becomes a dialectical process for achieving specific goals in learning, strategies for achieving goals, and a means of determining whether goals have been achieved or not (Yancey, 2017). Reflection also includes the process of cognition and various activities that can enhance learning resulting from experience (White, 2012). Thus, reflective journals become a tool for recording experience, especially in the fields of expertise and profession. Apart from being a means of dialogue with oneself to record experiences, reflective journals are used as a means to improve written communication skills (Mcguire et al., 2009). This statement raises the assumption, if writing reflective journals can improve written communication, of course, this will be very suitable if applied to the development of writing skills. During this time reflective journal writing is done for professional development and expertise while for developing writing skills it is rarely used. Therefore, there is nothing wrong if writing reflective journals is also used consistently in developing writing skills. Reflective journals can be used as a means to monitor the development and improvement of writing skills.

If reflective journals are used in writing it is assumed to be able to monitor the growth of students' metacognition in writing (Ramadhanti et al., 2020). In fact, students who have limitations in writing and who have metacognitive weaknesses in writing can be helped by using reflective journals as a guide to the writing process. Weaknesses in students' metacognition in writing, namely: having a dependence on others if they have difficulty in writing, not realizing the benefits of the strategies used, and not being able to assess their own understanding of information received in writing (Ramadhanti et al., 2019). To overcome the weaknesses of student metacognition in writing, students need an appropriate evaluation tool, for example writing evaluation tools based on a process approach so that it will be seen every process that students do in writing, starting from the planning process, translation, and evaluation. During this writing process, students are guided with reflective journals. Reflective journals given to students are journals designed with domains that can help students foster metacognition in writing, ranging from raising awareness about cognition, assignments, and self, guiding to have critical considerations in completing assignments and having the habit to plan learning and the effort made to complete the task.

The reflective journal is used during writing so it is assumed that students can grow their metacognition in writing. In addition, reflective journals are also a means to develop students' critical and analytical skills in an effort to complete an assignment. Critical and analytical skills need to be possessed by the current generation because it is a skills needed in the 21st century (Sharif & Zainuddin, 2017). One type of text-based writing skills that students need to master is explanatory text. The explanatory text is one type of factual text that presents the writer's view of how or why something happens, why something exists or is different, and how to solve a problem, both natural and social phenomena (Anderson & Anderson, 1997). During the writing process, students will be guided by using a reflective journal. Students report their writing process, from planning, translation, and evaluation using reflective journals. Based on the foregoing, this study aims to answer the following research questions. (1) how do students perception to the use of reflective journals in writing explanatory texts?; (2) how is the effect of a reflective journal on the ability to write explanatory texts?; and (3) how do students write activities while using reflective journals?.

B. METHODS

This research was a quantitative study using a correlational method to describe how much influence a reflective journal has on the ability to write explanatory texts. The sample in this study were students studying in Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa dan Sastra Indonesia, STKIP PGRI Sumatera Barat. The research sample consisted of 63 male and female students who were randomly selected. After using a reflective journal in writing explanatory text. Research samples were asked to fill out a questionnaire to find out their response to the use of reflective journals in writing. They were also interviewed to find out their writing activities while using reflective journals.

The instrument used was this study consisting of four types. First, the task sheet for writing explanatory texts that have been developed and tested for validity in the writing process (Ramadhanti et al., 2019). The writing process starts with planning, translating, and evaluation. Second, reflective journal guidelines. Reflective journals are developed based on the theory of metacognition processes consisting of awareness, evaluation, and regulation to foster student metacognition in writing (Ramadhanti et al., 2020). The reflective journal consists of 40 questions completed with four sub-questions to find out the growth of students' metacognition in writing

explanatory texts. Third, participants were given a perception questionnaire on the use of reflective journals consisting of three domains, namely: motivation and self-confidence, enhancing learning, and values and comfort. The number of statements to determine motivation and self-confidence was 7 points, increased learning was 11 points, and the value and comfort were 7 points. The questionnaire provided was modified from the questionnaire used as an effective technique in the writing process (Farrah, 2012). Criteria for interpretation of perception uses a scale of six, namely: very good with a range of interpretations 81-100%, good with a range of interpretations of 61-80%, good enough with a range of interpretations of 41-60%, poor with a range of interpretations of 21-40%, and very poor with an interpretation range of 0-20%

Fourth, interview questions. In addition to questionnaires, interviews were also conducted to determine students' writing activities while using reflective journals to monitor the writing process. The interview questions were modified from detailed questions arranged to enhance learning through reflection (Xhaferi & Xhaferi, 2017). The number of questions consists of 10 items, namely: (1) explain your opinion about the reflective journal that you use in writing explanatory texts!; (2) do you think that reflective journals help improve your thinking in writing explanatory texts?; (3) in your opinion, how important is the use of reflective journals in the learning process of writing? If it is important, how often do lecturers have to use the reflective journal?; (4) have you ever used reflective journals in the learning process?; (5) explain the opportunities and benefits you get by using reflective journals in writing explanatory texts!; (6) what weaknesses of writing do you feel can be overcome by using reflective journals in writing explanatory texts?; (7) what do you think of the application of reflective journals in the learning process as a means of monitoring your thoughts in the learning process?; (8) in your opinion, can you improve learning outcomes in writing by using reflective journals?; (9) in your opinion, what are the advantages of reflective journals if the lecturer always uses them to monitor your understanding in the learning process of writing?; and (10) in your opinion, do students need initial training to use of reflective journals in the learning process?

The research sample worked on the task of writing explanatory text and then monitored the writing activity using reflective journal guidelines. The research sample was given a questionnaire to find out their perceptions about reflective journals in writing. Furthermore, the research sample was interviewed to find out their activities while using reflective journals to monitor the writing process. Data analysis was carried out in two ways, namely descriptive analysis was conducted to describe students' perceptions about the use of reflective journals and quantitative analysis with descriptive statistical tests and correlation Fitri & Ramadhanti (2019) was used to determine how much influence a reflective journal has on the ability to write explanatory text. This descriptive statistical test and correlation using the SPSS 23 application.

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. Students' Perceptions about the Use of Reflective Journals

The response given by students to the use of reflective journals in writing explanatory texts shows a very good response. Of the 63 students observed, 36 were very good, 8 good, 3 good enough, 5 were bad, and 11 were very bad. In general, students say that reflective journals can increase motivation and self-confidence, learning improvement, and provide value and comfort when used in monitoring the process of writing explanatory texts. Students' perceptions about the use of these reflective journals are visualized in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Students' Perceptions about Reflective Journal

No	Indicator	%	Category
1	Motivation and self-confidence	73,68%	Good
2	Learning improvement	71,43%	Good
3	Value and convenience	70,97	Good
	Average	72,02%	Good

a. Motivation and Self-Confidence

The items available in Table 2 are students' perceptions of motivation and self-confidence while using reflective journals. Students give a good response that writing reflective journals can increase student motivation and confidence in writing explanatory texts. Students feel that reflective journals can help them talk about their writing experience (item 1: 84.10%), express their ideas and opinions (item 2: 76.20%), and respond to their thoughts and feelings (item 3: 74.60%). Writing reflective journals can also increase creativity (item 11: 69.80%) and communication skills of students in communication (item 10: 68.25%), even motivating them to write more (item 12: 69.80%). In addition, reflective journals also foster student confidence. Students gain independence in learning because with or without the help of peers, they can complete assignments (item 25: 73.00%).

Table 2. Percentage of Students' Perceptions about Motivation and Self-Confidence in Using Reflective Journals

	Item	Yes	No
1	Writing reflective journals helps me talk about my experiences.	84,10	15,90
2	Writing reflective journals helps me to express my ideas and opinions.	76,20	23,80
3	Writing reflective journals helps me respond to my thoughts and feelings.	74,60	25,40
10	Writing reflective journals improved my communication skills.	68,25	31,75
11	Writing reflective journals increases my creativity.	69,80	30,20
12	Writing reflective journals motivates me to write more.	69,80	30,20
25	Writing reflective journals fosters my confidence so that with or without the help of peers, I can complete assignments.	73,00	27,00

Thus, reflective journals can increase motivation and self-confidence in writing explanatory texts. Students can record writing experiences in a reflective journal. Reflective journals help express ideas, respond to thoughts and feelings, improve creativity and communication skills, motivate writing, and foster self-confidence in completing writing assignments.

b. Learning Improvement

The items available in Table 3 are students' perceptions of improved learning after the use of reflective journals. Students give a good response that writing reflective journals can improve learning, especially in writing explanatory texts. Students stated that writing reflective journals was a way to explore learning (item 5: 73.00%) and stimulate critical thinking skills (item 4: 63.50%). Writing reflective journals also gives students the opportunity to gain self-knowledge (item 6: 77.80%), help understand what is learned (item 7: 76.20%), help give an idea of what is understood about the assignment (item 8:

73,00%), and develop and strengthen writing skills (item 9: 76.20%). In addition, the use of reflective journals also helps the growth of metacognition, namely: helping students realize cognition, tasks and themselves while working on assignments (item 23: 71.40%), critically consider the knowledge and quality of the results obtained (item 22: 71,40 %), and form a habit in students to always plan, think about goals, and use appropriate strategies to complete assignments (item 24: 66.70%). Writing reflective journals can also develop students' independent learning because using reflective journals makes students have the habit of organizing their own learning (item 21: 66.70%) and helps students realize the benefits of the strategies used while completing assignments (items 20: 69,80 %), as shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Percentage of Students' Perceptions about Learning Improvement after Use of Reflective Journals

	Item	Yes	No
4	Writing reflective journals stimulates my critical thinking skills.	63,50	36,50
5	Writing reflective journals is a way of thinking to explore my learning.	73,00	27,00
6	Writing reflective journals is an opportunity to gain self-knowledge.	77,80	22,20
7	Writing reflective journals helps me understand what I am learning.	76,20	23,80
8	Writing reflective journals allows me to describe what I understand.	73,00	27,00
9	Writing reflective journals gives me the opportunity to develop and strengthen my writing skills.	76,20	23,80
20	Writing reflective journals helps me realize the benefits of the strategies I use in completing assignments.	69,80	30,20
21	Writing reflective journals makes me have a habit of organizing my learning.	66,70	33,30
22	Writing reflective journals helps me critically consider the knowledge and quality of the results I get.	71,40	28,60
23	Writing reflective journals helps me become aware of my cognition, assignments, and myself while completing assignments.	71,40	28,60
24	Writing a reflective journal forms a habit from me to always plan, think about goals, and use strategies that are appropriate for completing assignments.	66,70	33,30

Thus, reflective journals can improve student learning. They can do writing assignments according to the writing stages, starting from planning, developing ideas, and evaluating writing. They are accustomed to organizing learning and thinking of appropriate strategies in writing. They can do this because all the obstacles and weaknesses in writing are recorded in a reflective journal. Students can reflect on their own learning and know their weaknesses in writing. They can also think of efforts that can be made to overcome these weaknesses through reflective journals.

c. Value and Convenience

The items available in Table 4 are students' perceptions about the value and convenience of using reflective journals. Students give a good response that students get value and comfort while writing reflective journals, especially in writing explanatory texts. Students

get the ease of writing reflective journals (item 16: 66.67%) and try to make time to write reflective journals (item 14: 79.37%), (item 15: 79.37%). Students understand well what will be written (item 13: 69.80%) and have no difficulty in writing reflective journals (item 19: 61.90%). Considering the benefits and convenience of writing a reflective journal, students feel that journal writing should always be encouraged and continued in the learning process (item 17: 79.37%). In fact, as many as 38 students felt the need to share with the class and discuss everything written in reflective journals (item 18: 60.30%).

Table 4. Percentage of Student's Perceptions about the Value and Convenience of Using Reflective Journals

	Item	Yes	No
13	I did not understand what I was supposed to write in my journal.	30,20	69,80
14	I don't have enough time to write in my journal.	20,63	79,37
15	Writing reflective journals is a waste of time.	20,63	79,37
16	I find it easy to write in my journal.	66,67	33,33
17	The writing of reflective journals in the learning process must always be encouraged and continued.	79,37	20,63
18	I want to share with the class, everything that I write in my journal.	60,30	39,70
19	I have trouble keeping a journal because I'm not used to writing.	38,10	61,90

Thus, reflective journals for students are valuable and enjoyable. They are used to writing because reflective journals train them to develop writing skills. Self-confidence in writing has increased because of the reflective journal.

2. The Effect of Reflective Journals on the Ability to Write Explanatory Text

The reflective journal as the independent variable (X) was tested using a correlational design to determine how much influence it had on the ability to write explanatory text as the dependent variable (Y). The descriptive statistical test for the two research variables is visualized in Table 5 below.

Table 5. Descriptive Statistical Test of Research Variables

	Reflective Journal	Explanatory Text
N	Valid	63
	Missing	0
Mean	65.7778	82.0000
Std. Error of Mean	3.39968	.72056
Median	84.0000	85.0000
Mode	84.00	85.00
Std. Deviation	26.98413	5.71924
Variance	728.143	32.710
Skewness	-1.086	-.743
Std. Error of Skewness	.302	.302
Kurtosis	-.610	-.770
Std. Error of Kurtosis	.595	.595
Range	68.00	20.00

	Reflective Journal	Explanatory Text
Minimum	16.00	70.00
Maximum	84.00	90.00
Sum	4144.00	5166.00

Based on Table 5 above, the descriptive statistical test for reflective journal variables the following results were obtained. Samples that filled out the questionnaire were 63 people and no data was lost. Tendency central data values, namely: the mean of data is 65,78; the median of data is 84,00; the mode of data is 84,00; and the sum of data is 4144. The data dispersion (deviation) values, namely: the minimum score is 16.00; the maximum score is 84.00; the range of data is 68.00; the variance of data is 728,14; the standard deviation of data is 26,98; and the standard error of mean data is 3,40. Based on the data distribution, the ratio value of skewness is -3,596 and the ratio value of kurtosis is -1,025. This value indicates that the data is not normally distributed.

For the variable writing explanatory text, the sample worked on the task of writing explanatory text as many as 63 people and no data was lost. Tendency central data values, namely: the mean of data is 82,00; the median of data is 85,00; the mode of data is 85,00; and the sum of data is 5166. The dispersion value (data deviation), namely: the minimum score is 70,00; the maximum score is 90,00; the range of data is 20.00; the variance of data is 32,71; the standard deviation of data is 5,72; and the standard error of the mean data is 0,72. Based on the data distribution, the ratio value of skewness is -2,46 and the ratio value of kurtosis is -1,294. This value indicates that the data is not normally distributed. To find out how much the reflective journal factor affects the ability to write explanatory text, the Pearson Product Moment correlation formula is used. The results of the product moment statistical test are visualized in Table 6 below.

Table 6. Product Moment Correlation Test

	Reflective Journal	Explanatory Text
Students Perceptions	Pearson Correlation	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.828**
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	45144.889
	Covariance	728.143
	N	63
Explanatory Text	Pearson Correlation	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.828**
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	7924.000
	Covariance	127.806
	N	63

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Based on Table 6 above, the coefficient of reflective journal and the ability to write explanatory text is 0,828 ($p=0,01$). These results indicate that the magnitude of the relationship between the reflective journal variable and the explanatory writing ability variable is 0.828. This relationship shows a positive and very strong relationship between the two variables because it is in the range 0.80—1.00. These results indicate that the sample who obtained high scores in writing explanatory text also showed high scores in making use of reflective journal. Samples that get low

scores in writing explanatory text also show low scores in making use of reflective journal. To determine the contribution of the reflective journal to the ability to write explanatory text, a statistical test is performed as visualized in Table 7 below.

Table 7. Variable Significance Test

	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.828 ^a	.686	.681	3.23188

a. Predictors: (Constant), Reflective Journal

Based on Table 7 above, the t-test value is 3,23 and the t-table for sample 63-2 is 1.67. These results indicate that the t-test value is greater than the t-table. It can be concluded that there is a significant relationship between the reflective journal and the ability to write explanatory text. The relationship between the two variables is very strong. Thus, the use of reflective journal has a significant effect on the ability to write explanatory text. The amount of contribution of the reflective journal variable to the ability to write explanatory text is seen based on the R-Square value in Table 7 is 0.686. By using the formula $KP = r^2 \times 100\%$, the value of contribution of variable X to variable Y is 68,6%. This means: the reflective journal becomes a predictor that affects the ability to write explanatory text by 68,6% and the remaining 31,4% is determined by other variables.

3. Students' Writing Activities that are Monitoring Using Reflective Journals

To support the results of the questionnaire, interviews were conducted to determine students' perceptions about the use of reflective journals. A number of students responded positively to the application of reflective journals as a metacognitive monitoring tool in writing explanatory texts. Students feel the impact of using reflective journals to monitor the development of their writing. Reflective journals are very helpful in writing, as a measurement of writing progress, starting from planning; evaluate; and revising writing, as a tool to find out the strengths and weaknesses in writing, and monitor the stages of thinking in writing. As stated by Sample 052 below. *In my opinion, the reflective journal that I use when writing explanatory texts really helps me come up with ideas. I also made the reflective journal as a guide in writing correct explanatory texts. In addition, the journal also helped me to see my progress in writing explanatory texts.*

Students also feel that reflective journals need to be applied in a continuous learning process. Reflective journals as the main means of monitoring thinking, help the thought process and develop thinking about tasks. In fact, reflective journals are not only a monitoring tool for thinking but also a learning evaluation tool. As stated by Sample 013 below. *In my opinion, reflective journals are not only a monitoring tool for thinking but also as an evaluation tool for learning. Every learning process that is done is not all going well, there will certainly be strengths and weaknesses. All of that was recorded in a reflective journal. Reflective journals as an evaluation tool that can help overcome weaknesses found in the learning process.*

For students, reflective journals play an important role in improving thinking and becoming a guide in monitoring the progress of writing. In fact, students feel that lecturers need to often apply reflective journals in learning. Not only students but lecturers also need to use reflective journals to monitor the progress of their teaching. As stated by Sample 014 below. *In my opinion, reflective journals are very important and if they continue to be used it will affect the quality of the writing. Reflective journals as a guide in the writing process. If you make a mistake in writing, then try again to make no mistake. This journal can guide the strengths and weaknesses in writing.*

Lecturers should also use reflective journals in every learning so that every development in writing learning is monitored.

In addition, reflective journals play a role in improving critical thinking skills and improving the quality of learning. Reflective journals help monitor thoughts about what is being written. Regular thinking in writing has an impact on the writing produced. Writing becomes more qualified because all the writing processes that are carried out are monitored using reflective journals. In fact, reflective journals are very instrumental in guiding novice writers to complete the task of writing explanatory texts. As stated by Sample 052 below. *Reflective journals really helped me in improving the quality of my writing. Initially, I was only able to write an explanatory text for no more than two pages or only six paragraphs. Since I used reflective journals to monitor my progress in writing, I have been able to write explanatory texts up to seven pages. I realize that my writing skills have changed for the better. I am very happy. I feel reflective journal really helped me.*

In terms of benefiting from reflective journals, students try to understand the instructions for using journals contained in the reflective journal guidelines that have been given by lecturers. Although first using reflective journals to guide the development of writing, students try to use journals and answer each question according to the efforts made during writing. The questions contained in the journal are very helpful and become a guide in developing explanatory text writing. Some of the benefits gained by students after using reflective journals while writing explanatory texts, namely: students know the strengths and weaknesses in writing, students can monitor the progress of writing; students become more critical in solving various problems encountered in writing; students feel they have a great opportunity to develop their writing skills because they are monitored with reflective journals; through reflective journals, students can see the extent of their writing skills because the questions asked to require them to do so in writing, from planning to writing, developing ideas, evaluating and raising good writing habits; reflective journals give students control and guidance in writing explanatory texts; and through the questions raised, students try to carry out activities as stated in the reflective journal guidelines so as to create a habit in themselves to always be aware of the thoughts and efforts made in completing writing. One of the statements made by students about the benefits of reflective journals is stated by Sample 013 below. *The benefit that I get from using reflective journals is that I know my strengths and weaknesses while writing. Through that journal, I realized how my lack of interest in writing and my abilities were very low. At first, I was not aware of the knowledge I was going to write and the effort I was making to finish writing. During the evaluation phase, I found out that there were many errors in my writing. I will continue to improve my writing by following each writing process according to the assignment sheet given and the reflective journal guidelines. I tried until I began to acquire certain habits in writing. I need to plan well the things I will write, I evaluate and revise until I get better results.*

Some student statements also show the advantages of using reflective journals and weaknesses that can be overcome by using reflective journals. Students stated that the advantages or advantages of using reflective journals can be felt by lecturers and students. Students can know the strengths and weaknesses in writing, students can monitor the extent of their understanding in writing, and feel there are guidelines that can be a guide in producing quality writing. As stated by Sample 052 below. *Excellence is felt when writing. My writing assignments became more organized and did not come out of the chosen theme. Reflective journals are really an appropriate guide in helping to produce good writing. The quality of writing is better because it is assisted with questions that explore the ability to think and the ability to find facts that support writing. I became*

accustomed to writing according to the process presented in the writing assignment sheet and reflective journal guides. I think I should always use this journal not only in completing writing assignments but for everything I do so that I become a qualified prospective educator. Moreover, soon I will be an intern at school. I will use reflective journals to monitor my activities in the field so that I know my strengths and weaknesses.

Students also state that if the lecturer also uses a reflective journal to monitor the teaching process, the lecturer will also be able to improve the quality of teaching, as stated by Sample 048 below. *Each lecturer can also use reflective journals in the teaching process. By reading students' reflective journals, lecturers can find out their strengths and weaknesses. That way, lecturers can use other strategies to improve their teaching. I also need to use reflective journals to control my teaching process later in my internship school so that I know the strengths and weaknesses of my teaching.*

Students feel the advantages of using reflective journals in writing and feel the need to use reflective journals when they become pre-service teachers in the field later. Many of the weaknesses of their writing that they can overcome after using reflective journals, for example how to present paragraphs that can attract the attention of readers and problems developing the contents of the writing in accordance with the criteria of the text, and so on. As stated by Sample 048 below. *Every time I write, I find it difficult to start my writing. I have difficulty developing ideas and presenting sentences effectively. Reflective journals help me a lot. Reflective journals provide a guide for me in presenting good writing. I write by going through every writing process that should be, starting from planning writing, developing ideas, and evaluating writing. With reflective journals, I am aware of my thoughts and the strategies I must use in completing my writing.*

When asked the level of frequency of using reflective journals in the learning process in language classes, the average student said it was the first time using reflective journals. During this time they are not accustomed to using reflective journals and are also not recommended by lecturers who teach. Once there is an opportunity to use reflective journals in writing explanatory texts, they immediately feel the benefits of using reflective journals and feel the need to use reflective journals for whatever writing activities are carried out. Given the lack of use of reflective journals, some students said they felt uncomfortable using reflective journals. As stated by Sample 063 below. *I realize that the use of reflective journals is very important in the learning process of writing because it serves as a tool to guide the development of writing. However, in my opinion, the lecturer should rethink using this journal because not everything can be reported and understood.*

The statement is a guideline for lecturers to always encourage students to always use reflective journals. Using reflective journals will be difficult at first, but it will be easy if students and lecturers alike use them in the learning process. Students also said the reflective journal writing guidelines given by lecturers need to continue to be a concern of lecturers so that students have no difficulty reporting all learning activities undertaken. In order for reflective journal writing to become a habit among students, especially students who are not accustomed to writing reflective journals, initial training needs to be conducted by lecturers. Students need to be informed of the role and function of reflective journals in the learning process. Students need to be accustomed to using this reflective journal given the great benefits obtained from reflective journals. Initial training needs to be given to foster the habits of students using reflective journals as self-reflection tools. As stated by Sample 063 below. *In my opinion, I need to get initial training to use reflective journals in writing because at first I also did not understand how to use and use the journal. After using reflective journals, I feel I have benefited from the progress in the quality of my writing.*

The results of the interview showed that the first time students used reflective journals to monitor the progress of writing. After using reflective journals, students feel the benefits of reflective journals in writing explanatory texts. More than 60% of students stated that they benefited from the use of reflective journals. They can learn from their experiences recorded in reflective journals. The experience is used as material for reflection to improve the quality of learning. Another 40% of students still feel they need training in journal writing so that they are accustomed to using it in the learning process

Five areas of students' perception in writing reflective journals, namely: active involvement and personal ownership of learning, critical thinking, understanding of ownership of learning, learning experience facilities, and assessing observation and personal knowledge (Estrada et al., 2014). The five fields are summarized into three areas that show the usefulness of reflective journals in the learning process, namely to increase motivation and self-confidence, enhance learning, and the value and comfort of using reflective journals to monitor the learning process (Farrah, 2012), specifically to monitor the growth of metacognition, starting from raising awareness about the task's knowledge and effort completion, monitoring the quality and results obtained, and fostering the habit of planning, setting goals, and implementing certain strategies in completing tasks. Students who are used to writing reflective journals in the learning process will be able to develop their writing skills and will become independent learners.

More than 60% of students investigated stated that reflective journals are very useful for developing their writing skills. The results obtained also showed that reflective journals that were prepared using the domains of the metacognition process, namely awareness, evaluation, and regulation showed a good influence on the growth of students' metacognition in writing. The growth of student metacognition is monitored by using reflective journals, namely: students begin to realize their cognition, assignments, and self while doing their assignments, students become critical and are able to critically consider the knowledge they have in task completion and the quality of the results obtained, and students have habit in him to always plan, think about goals, and use appropriate strategies to complete the task. They can also arrange their own learning so that they begin to grow into independent learners.

Some metacognition weaknesses that are also able to be overcome by using reflective journals as a tool to monitor the development of writing, namely: students have confidence in the effort to complete the task so that with or without the help of peers, they can complete their assignments, students who start thinking about cognition, task, and he began to realize the benefits of the strategy used to complete the task, and students who have the habit of planning tasks and learning objectives can begin to understand every information received in an effort to completing the task. This shows the role of reflective journals as a powerful metacognition monitoring tool in completing writing assignments. Students have the motivation and confidence to complete the task so that it affects the quality of learning, especially writing.

The use of reflective journals has its own value for more than 60% of students in their task-completion efforts. They feel comfortable if the reflective journal is always used in developing writing skills. In fact, among students have the desire to use reflective journals as a tool to monitor their activities in the school if they have become pre-service teachers at school later. Reflective journals are believed to increase the reflectivity of pre-service teachers while carrying out field experience Bain et al. (1999) in order to have the right teaching strategy, have personal competencies that are in accordance with the profession and be able to utilize existing facilities in accordance with teaching needs (Fajriah et al., 2019). The efficacy of reflective journals in professional development has also been proven by students in various fields of science, such as

nursing and pharmacy. For them, reflective journal writing is useful as a means of developing personal, professional, and clinical learning (Mahlanze & Sibiya, 2017)(Er et al., 2018) and very useful in the results of learning and role development in the future (Langley & Brown, 2010)(Fritson et al., 2013). Given the broad scope of the use of reflective journals, the benefits are not only felt in the nursing field, but also in other fields that require professional development efforts and the development of analytical and critical thinking, as the demands of the 21st century. Reflective journals are useful in future self-development. Reflections carried out through reflective journals serve as personal strengths and as a note of competency limitations and it needs to be improved in professional activities. The experience recorded in reflective journals and the collaboration with teams and colleagues have an impact on the emergence of greater confidence in future professional development (Bubnys, 2019).

Meanwhile, more than 40% of students stated that it was difficult to use reflective journals because they did not have the habit of writing reflective journals. However, they continue to strive to use reflective journals. This can be seen from their writing which began to show progress. The use of reflective journals needs to become a habit in the learning process and teachers need to think of appropriate strategies so that students have the opportunity to reflect and use reflective journals as a means of monitoring the progress of their learning, especially in efforts to complete assignments (White, 2012)(Ramadhanti, 2024). In addition, students also object to sharing their journals in class. This happened because they first used reflective journals and were still confused about using them. This shows that teachers must always use reflective journals whose guidelines are tailored to the needs of students. Students should always be encouraged to use reflective journals until they themselves feel the impact of using reflective journals on the development of the quality of their learning (Evans & Maloney, 1998). The feedback given by the teacher to reflective journals written by students must be distinguished from the feedback given to assess the progress of learning outcomes because it is a different matter (Boud, 2001). The teacher must be able to provide appropriate feedback so that students can find weaknesses and strengths in completing assignments and find the best techniques for completing assignments (Hashemi & Mirzaei, 2015). By providing positive, adequate, and appropriate feedback to students' learning needs, students will no longer complain about the difficulties encountered and begin to feel the impact of journal writing on their learning, especially language learning (Sharif & Zainuddin, 2017). Positive responses received by students can balance attention and intuitive hearing with deep questions in meaningful dialogue (Fenwick, 2001). In other words, the questions contained in the reflective journal guide become a means of dialogue within the student so as to arouse his intuition in the context of self-reflection and self-evaluation.

Students' perceptions of the use of reflective journals are directly proportional to the results of statistical tests on the variables involved, namely reflective journals and the ability to write explanatory text. The results of the correlation test show that the relationship between the two variables is significant and very strong seen from the correlation value. The reflective journal affects the ability to write explanatory text by 68.6% and the remaining 31.4% is influenced by other variables. This shows that reflective journals are the main predictors that affect the ability to write explanatory texts. Students who are able to use reflective journals in monitoring the writing process get good marks in writing. On the other hand, students who are not able to utilize journals in monitoring the writing process get low scores in writing.

Thus it can be stated that reflective journals play an important role in developing writing skills. Reflective journals have a positive impact on learning outcomes, help foster student metacognition, overcome metacognition weaknesses in writing, and increase confidence for self-

improvement in the future while learning from experience. The use of reflective journals must be an important part of the learning process. The teacher must try to instill the use of reflective journals as a basic practice in inquiry-based teaching (Hardwick, 2019). An investigation is done by making the experience as a means to learn to correct mistakes and try to correct those mistakes by choosing the right strategy.

D. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Reflective journals play an important role in developing writing skills. Reflective journals that are designed using the domains of the metacognition process can be used as a means to monitor the growth of student metacognition, starting from the process of awareness, evaluation, and regulation. The use of reflective journals in monitoring the writing process also influences the processes and products of student writing. Students who have metacognitive weaknesses and have weaknesses in writing show progress in writing. They know the weaknesses in writing through reflective journals. Reflective journals designed with the domains of the process of metacognition not only as an experience recording tool in writing but also as a guide for producing quality writing. Students are more understanding of cognition and task complexity, so they are motivated to think about the best effort to complete the task. Reflective journals need to be used consistently, both by teachers and students. For students, reflective journals are very useful for developing self-quality and learning. For teachers, reflective journals are also very useful for improving the quality of learning in the classroom. The teacher better understands the weaknesses and strengths of his students because he reads and provides appropriate feedback on journals written by students. If the teacher also writes reflective journals in his own learning process, he can also improve the quality of himself in teaching in class. Reflective journals are a powerful tool for recording experiences. Reflective journals teach students and teachers to always learn from experience by improving self-weaknesses in the future. It also shows that learning from experience is a powerful tool to improve self-quality.

In learning explanatory texts, reflective journals function as a tool to record all processes of writing texts starting from thinking about ideas, developing ideas, and evaluating writing. Students can find out their weaknesses and strengths in writing starting from presenting orientation in the introduction, presenting cause and effect ideas in the body, and recommendations in the closing section. This research is limited to students writing text and then recording the process they go through during the writing process. Students were also asked to provide their perceptions of the role of reflective journals during the process of writing explanatory texts. This research has not explained the efforts that can be made to maximize the use of reflective journals as a learning control tool. Further research can be directed at efforts to maximize reflective journals in learning to write and how to organize them so that they do not take a long time and the learning objectives are achieved.

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