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Towards Informed Reflection: Algerian EFL University Teachers' Perspectives and Applications of Reflective Models

نحو تأمل واعٍ: تصورات أساتذة اللغة الإنجليزية في بعض الجامعات الجزائرية وتطبيقاتهم لنماذج التفكير التأملي

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Abstract

This study examines the growing importance of reflective practice in English language teacher education amid complex classroom dynamics. It critically reviews six reflective models, analysing their strengths, weaknesses, and practical applications in supporting professional growth and teaching effectiveness. A questionnaire completed by 62 Algerian EFL university teachers explores their familiarity with these models, reflective practices, and challenges. Findings reveal valuable insights into how reflection is perceived and implemented, emphasizing the need for its structured integration into teacher education programmes. The study highlights reflection's role in fostering critical self-awareness, professional development, and improved pedagogy, underscoring the importance of reflective tools for addressing modern educational challenges.

Keywords: Continuous professional development, critical self-awareness, reflective models, teacher education

ملخص البحث:

تتناول هذه الدراسة أهمية الممارسة التأملية في تكوين مدرّسي اللغة الإنجليزية في ظل التعقيدات الصفّية، من خلال مراجعة نقدية لستة نماذج تأملية تم فيها تقيّيم نقاط قوتها وضعفها وتطبيقاتها العملية في دعم التطور المهني وتحسين فعالية التدريس. اعتمدت الدراسة على استبيان شمل 62 أستاذًا جامعياً جزائريًا لاستقصاء مدى معرفتهم بهذه النماذج وممارساتهم التأملية والتحديات التي يواجهونها. قدمت النتائج رؤى مهمة حول فهم التأمل وتطبيقه، مؤكدة الحاجة إلى إدماجه بطريقة منهجية في برامج تكوين الأساتذة. أبرزت الدراسة دور التأمل في تعزيز الوعي الذاتي النقدي، والتطوير المهني، وتحسين الممارسات البيداغوجية، مع التأكيد على أهمية أدوات التأمل في مواجهة التحديات التعليمية الحديثة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: التطوير المهني المستمر، الوعي الذاتي النقدي، النماذج التأملية، تكوين الأساتذة.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Reflective practice is essential for professional development in education, particularly in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teaching contexts. It involves critical self-analysis of teaching experiences, promoting continuous learning and improvement. In EFL teacher education, reflective practice not only supports personal growth but also enhances pedagogical competence and classroom effectiveness. Despite the increasing emphasis on reflective practice in teacher education globally, EFL teachers in Algeria face specific challenges, such as large class sizes and diverse student needs. Although these challenges may hinder effective teaching, the use of structured reflective models can help teachers navigate these difficulties by offering frameworks for professional development. This article aims to evaluate and compare different reflective models, considering their strengths, weaknesses, and practical applications in the context of Algerian EFL teaching. It also seeks to examine the participating teachers' familiarity with the targeted reflective models and provide an overview of their current choices and actions made to reflect, along with the steps they take to refine and enhance their pedagogy.

In pursuance of these aims, the study addresses the following research questions:

1) In what ways do different reflective models foster critical self-awareness among Algerian EFL teachers?
2) What are the strengths and weaknesses of these reflective models in the Algerian EFL context?
3) How do these reflective models contribute to the improvement of EFL teaching practices?
4) To what extent are Algerian EFL teachers familiar with these models and how are they currently using them in their teaching practices?
5) What challenges do teachers face when implementing reflective practices in their classrooms?

2. Literature Review

Reflective practice has gained significant attention in educational research, particularly in the field of teacher education. According to Schön (1983), reflective practice involves both "reflection-in-action" and "reflection-on-action". On the one hand, reflection-in-action takes place during the lesson itself. It is when teachers reflect in real-time while actively teaching, making adjustments as needed. For example, if a teacher notices that a particular activity is not engaging the students, they might change their approach on the spot to re-engage them. This type of reflection allows teachers to respond immediately to what is happening in the classroom, making their teaching more flexible and effective. On the other hand, reflection-on-action occurs after the lesson is over. Teachers take time to reflect on what went well, what did not, and why. For instance, they might think about how well students grasped the material or whether the pacing was right. This reflection helps teachers to identify areas for improvement and plan for future lessons. Together, both types of reflection support ongoing professional growth, helping

teachers refine their practice in both the moment and over time .

Several reflective models have been developed to guide teachers through the process of self-reflection, each with varying approaches and stages. In this research paper, we reviewed and compared six prominent models, namely Gibbs' Reflective Cycle, Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle, Brookfield's Four Lenses, Schön's Reflective Practice, Driscoll's Model of Reflection, and Johns' Model for Structured Reflection.

2.1 Gibbs' Reflective Cycle

Gibbs' Reflective Cycle, initially developed by Professor Graham Gibbs in 1988, is a widely used framework in various educational settings. The cycle consists of six stages: Description, Feelings, Evaluation, Analysis, Conclusion, and Action Plan. This structured approach guides individuals through a reflective process, encouraging them to critically examine their experiences, emotional responses, and the outcomes of their teaching practices (Gibbs, 1988). In the context of EFL teacher education, this cycle offers a valuable tool for both pre-service and in-service teachers to enhance their professional development. Recent studies have demonstrated the relevance of Gibbs' cycle in fostering reflective practices among EFL teachers. For example, Smith and Johnson's (2024) study on reflective practices in EFL classrooms showed that applying the cycle helped teachers identify strengths and areas for improvement in their teaching methods, leading to more adaptive and responsive pedagogical strategies. Furthermore, the cycle supports EFL teachers in developing critical self-awareness, which is essential for refining classroom management and enhancing student engagement (Brown & Lee, 2023). By regularly using this reflective framework, EFL teachers can continuously improve their teaching effectiveness, fostering better learning outcomes for their students.

2.2 Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle

Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle (1984) is a widely recognised framework for understanding how individuals learn through experience. The model consists of four stages: Concrete Experience, Reflective Observation, Abstract Conceptualization, and Active Experimentation. This cyclical process emphasises the importance of experiencing, reflecting, conceptualizing, and testing ideas. The cyclical nature of the model allows teachers to continuously improve by revisiting each stage after implementing changes based on earlier reflections. For example, Mechouat (2024) highlighted the positive impact of Kolb's cycle in EFL teacher education programmes. The study found that pre-service teachers who applied the cycle in their training developed increased confidence and competence in their teaching practices (Mechouat, 2024) .

2.3 Brookfield's Four Lenses

Stephen Brookfield's Four Lenses model, introduced in 1995, provides educators with a comprehensive framework for reflective teaching by examining their practices from four distinct perspectives: the autobiographical lens, the students' eyes, colleagues' experiences, and theoretical literature. This multifaceted approach encourages educators

to critically assess their teaching methods, understand student experiences, seek peer feedback, and align their practices with established educational theories. Applying Brookfield's Four Lenses has proven beneficial in education. For instance, Pallangyo and Isangula (2023) utilised this framework to reflect on teaching practices and enhance student engagement in online group discussions. Their study highlighted the importance of considering personal teaching experiences, student feedback, peer insights, and relevant literature to improve active learning in EFL settings. Similarly, Benosmane (2022) emphasised the role of empathy in EFL teaching through the lens of Brookfield's model. By reflecting on personal experiences, understanding students' perspectives, consulting colleagues, and integrating theoretical insights, educators can create a more inclusive and effective learning environment .

2.4 Schön's Reflective Practice

Donald Schön's concept of reflective practice, introduced in his seminal works 'The Reflective Practitioner' (1983) and 'Educating the Reflective Practitioner' (1987), has significantly influenced professional development across various fields, including EFL education. As stated earlier, Schön (1983) distinguished between "reflection-in-action" and "reflection-on-action". This dual approach encourages continuous improvement and adaptability in teaching methodologies.

Schön's reflective practice has been instrumental in enhancing teaching effectiveness. For instance, Ashraf et al. (2016) conducted a qualitative study involving 18 Iranian EFL teachers, identifying four key factors influencing their reflective practices: practical, cognitive, meta-cognitive, and affective. These reflections led to improved teaching quality and increased student motivation. Furthermore, Al-Jaro and Asmawi (2018) explored the reflective experiences of EFL student teachers during their practicum, highlighting the importance of systematic reflection in teacher preparation programmes. Their findings suggest that engaging in reflective practice enhances teaching skills and professional development .

These studies underscore the efficacy of Schön's reflective practice in fostering professional growth and improving teaching outcomes in EFL contexts. By embracing both reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action, educators can cultivate a dynamic and responsive teaching environment that meets the evolving needs of learners. Mainly, this model is particularly useful for EFL teachers who must make rapid decisions in the classroom.

2.5 Driscoll's Model of Reflection

Driscoll's Model of Reflection, developed by John Driscoll in 1994, offers a structured approach to reflective practice, guiding individuals through a three-question framework:

- What? Describe the experience.
- So what? Analyse the significance of the experience.
- Now what? Plan how to apply the insights gained to future situations.

This model, rooted in Terry Borton's 1970 reflective framework, emphasises simplicity and accessibility, making it widely applicable across various fields, including EFL education. For example, a study by Reyes-Chua and Al Shlowiy (2020) highlighted the effectiveness of maintaining reflective teaching diaries among EFL instructors. The study recommended that teachers regularly reflect on their teaching experiences, document these reflections, and engage in continuous studies on reflective practice to improve classroom teaching and learning processes. Additionally, Rodríguez Escobar (2023) explored how reflective practice serves as a dialogical space for novice EFL teachers in Chile to construct their professional identities. The research underscored the importance of reflective practices in understanding and shaping the evolving identities of EFL educators .

2.6 Johns' Model for Structured Reflection

Christopher Johns' Model for Structured Reflection, introduced in 1995, offers a comprehensive framework for practitioners to critically analyse their experiences and enhance their professional practice. Originally developed for the nursing sector, this model has been widely adopted across various disciplines, including EFL education. Johns' model encourages individuals to reflect on their actions and the influencing factors, promoting deeper self-awareness and continuous improvement. This model provides a detailed, question-based approach to reflection. It guides teachers through an exploration of the context, their actions, and the outcomes of their teaching. This model encourages deep and critical reflection. It is particularly suited to teachers seeking to understand the deeper implications of their practices.

3. Methodology

This study employed a quantitative research design, utilising an online questionnaire as the primary data collection method. The questionnaire was distributed to approximately 100 Algerian EFL university teachers using a non-probability sampling approach combining purposive and convenience sampling, as participants were selected based on the criterion of being Algerian EFL university teachers, and on the accessibility of their email addresses obtained from university websites and conference listings. Responses were received from 62 participants. It should be noted that the study did not collect detailed demographic and professional variables such as academic rank, years of teaching experience, or the specific teaching contexts (e.g., levels or subjects taught) in which reflective models are applied; therefore, these factors were not considered in the analysis.

The aim of the questionnaire was twofold: to evaluate the participants' reflective practices and to assess their opinions on the effectiveness of six different reflective models in fostering self-awareness and improving teaching practices. Additionally, the survey sought to gather information on the participants' familiarity with these reflective models, their current use of such models in their teaching, the challenges they encounter in implementing reflective practices, and their perspectives on the potential integration of

these models into teacher education programmes. The responses were then analysed to identify common themes and insights that could inform future teacher development strategies in the context of EFL education.

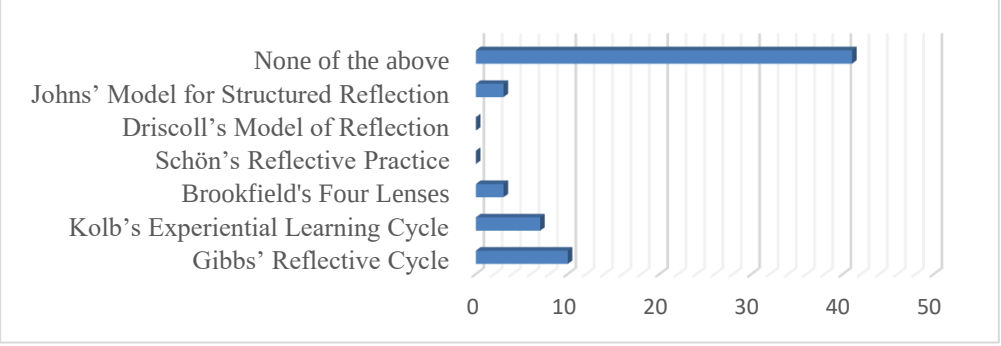
4. Results

The questionnaire gathered responses from Algerian EFL university teachers about their familiarity with and use of reflective models, the challenges they face in practicing reflection, and their views on incorporating these models into teacher education. The data analysis highlighted patterns, insights, and challenges specific to the Algerian context in EFL teaching across various universities.

Q1. Are you familiar with any of the following reflective models?

The responses reveal limited familiarity with reflective models among Algerian EFL teachers. A majority (66.13%) selected "None of the above," indicating minimal exposure to formal models during their training. Gibbs' Reflective Cycle was the most recognised, while Kolb's model was known to 7 participants, and both Brookfield's and Johns' models to only 3. These results suggest a narrow understanding of reflective practice, underscoring the need to broaden reflective model integration in teacher education programmes. This relatively higher recognition of Gibbs' model may be attributed to its structured and accessible cyclical framework, which is often more readily introduced in teacher education materials and professional development contexts. In contrast, other models may receive less emphasis or may be perceived as more abstract or less practical. These results suggest a narrow understanding of reflective practice, underscoring the need to broaden reflective model integration in teacher education programmes.

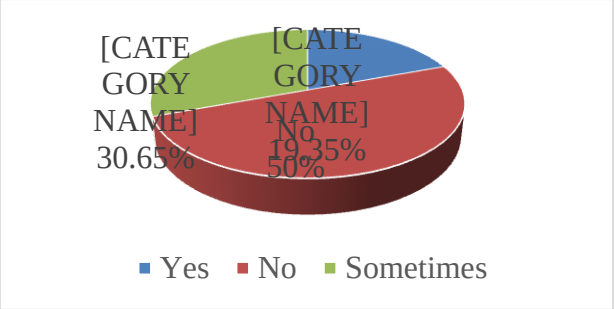
Fig.1. Familiarity with Reflective Models



Q2. Do you actively use any reflective models in your teaching practice?

The findings indicate limited application of reflective models in teaching practice among Algerian EFL teachers. Only 19.35% reported actively using them, while 50% do not use them at all. Additionally, 30.65% indicated occasional use. This suggests a gap between theoretical knowledge of formal reflective models and their practical implementation, which may be attributed to limited training, time constraints, or lack of institutional support.

Fig.2. Use of Reflective Models in Teaching Practice



Q3. If yes, which model(s) do you use?

The participants who indicated that they do actively use reflective models were asked to specify the model. Their responses can be grouped into four categories:

a. No Specific Model

Five participants indicated that they engage in reflective practice but do not adhere to any particular model. This suggests an intuitive or informal approach to reflection, where teachers evaluate their teaching experiences without following a structured framework. While such an approach can provide immediate insights, the absence of a systematic process might limit the depth and consistency of reflection. In the Algerian EFL context, this could be attributed to limited exposure to formal reflective practices during teacher training programmes or a lack of awareness about the available models.

b. Gibbs' Reflective Cycle

Two participants reported using Gibbs' Reflective Cycle, a widely recognised model that provides a structured, step-by-step approach to reflection. The structured nature of Gibbs' Cycle makes it particularly effective for fostering self-awareness and guiding professional development. However, one of the participants believes that the model's step-by-step approach is time-consuming for teachers with heavy workloads, a common challenge in Algerian universities.

c. Johns' Model for Structured Reflection

Two other participants identified Johns' Model as their preferred framework. This model prompts teachers to reflect deeply on specific incidents by considering a series of guiding questions. For example:

- "What was I trying to achieve"?
- "How did I feel about the situation"?
- "What were the consequences of my actions for the students"?

Johns' Model is highly analytical, encouraging teachers to explore the ethical, personal, and contextual dimensions of their teaching. While this depth of reflection can yield profound insights, it may require training and practice to implement effectively, particularly in a context where reflective practices are not yet widely institutionalised.

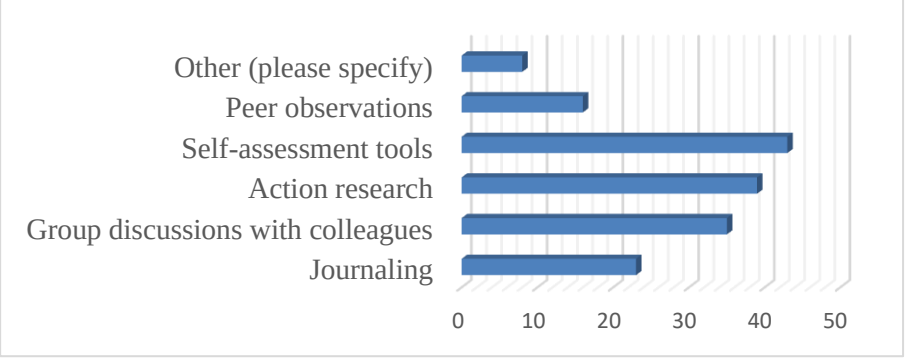
d. Uncertain or Not Sure

Only one participant expressed uncertainty about the reflective models they use. This ambiguity could indicate limited awareness of formal models or a lack of confidence in articulating their reflective practices. It highlights the need for professional development programmes that familiarise Algerian EFL teachers with diverse reflective models and their applications in teaching.

Q3. How do you typically reflect on your teaching practices?

The most common reflective practices included self-assessment tools (43 participants), group discussions (35 participants), and journaling (23 participants). Some participants also mentioned "students' comments and suggestions" and "discussions with students" as methods of reflection. Peer observations was selected by 16 participants. This indicates that teachers rely on both self-initiated and interactive approaches to reflection .

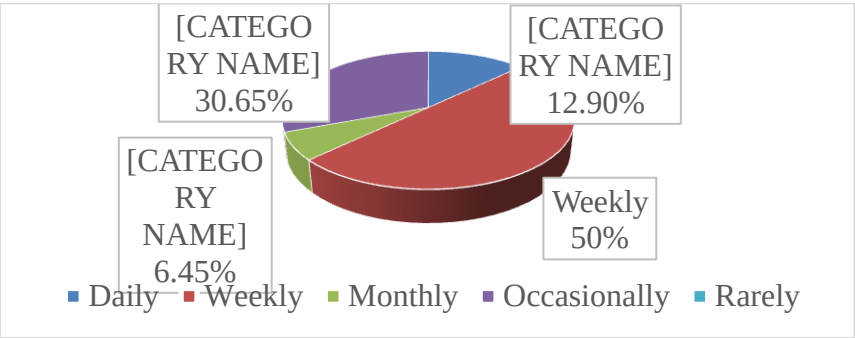
Fig.3. Methods of Reflecting on Teaching Practices



Q5. How often do you engage in reflective practices?

The data shows that while 50% of participants engage in reflective practices weekly, 30.65% do so only occasionally. A smaller proportion reflects daily (12.90%) or monthly (6.45%). This suggests that reflection is not yet a consistent habit for many teachers, likely due to time constraints, heavy workloads, or lack of structured support for reflective practice.

Fig.4. Frequency of Engagement in Reflective Practices



Q6. What challenges do you face when engaging in reflective practice ?

Although reflective practice is recognised as a vital component of professional growth for educators, the responses reveal that Algerian EFL university teachers face a variety of challenges when attempting to engage in reflective practice. The challenges cited by the participants include time constraints, lack of structure, insufficient feedback from peers, and difficulty in accessing relevant resources. Participants also noted issues related to students, such as their cognitive levels and engagement.

Many teachers indicated that reflective practice requires a significant investment of time, which is difficult to allocate given their heavy workloads and demanding schedules. Besides, in large class sizes and with limited resources, time constraints are a significant barrier to implementing structured reflective practices.

a) Lack of Structure and Guidance

Several participants expressed that the absence of a structured approach to reflection makes it difficult to engage effectively .

Additionally, the limited availability of constructive feedback from observers was noted as a challenge. Teachers shared that when consulting colleagues or supervisors, the feedback often lacked the depth and specificity needed to drive meaningful improvement. This highlights a potential gap in institutional support for fostering reflective practices.

b) Difficulty in Accessing Resources

A few participants reported challenges in finding appropriate materials that align with learners' needs and reflect on their teaching experiences effectively. This issue underscores the resource constraints faced by Algerian EFL educators, particularly in underfunded institutions or remote regions.

c) Student-Related Factors

The varying levels of students' cognitive abilities and engagement were cited as obstacles to reflection. For example, participants noted that students' limited critical thinking skills or lack of responsiveness can hinder the effectiveness of reflective practices aimed at improving classroom dynamics and teaching outcomes.

d) Motivation and Familiarity

Some respondents indicated a lack of motivation or familiarity with reflective practices as a barrier. Comments like “not familiar” and “lack of motivation” suggest that some teachers may not fully understand the benefits of reflection or feel incentivised to engage in it. This points to the need for awareness-raising initiatives and training in reflective methodologies.

e) Immediate Action vs. Deliberate Reflection

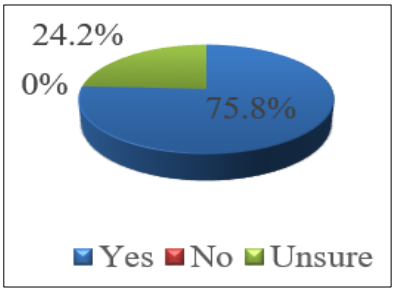
Teachers often face situations requiring immediate responses, leaving little room for the deliberate, structured reflection that effective practices demand. This tension between action and reflection can limit the scope and depth of reflective practices in classroom settings.

It is also worth mentioning that a minority of participants (6.45%) reported facing no challenges when engaging in reflective practices. This may indicate a higher level of experience, familiarity, or institutional support in their specific contexts.

Q7. Do you believe practicing intuitive reflection has improved your teaching?

A majority of participants (75.8%) affirmed that reflective practice had a positive impact on their teaching. It is important to note that this item refers to general intuitive reflective practice rather than the systematic use of formal reflective models. This result, therefore, suggests that although teachers may not consistently apply structured reflective frameworks, they still engage in informal reflection that contributes to improved teaching awareness, pedagogical decision-making, and classroom effectiveness.

Fig.5. Perceived Impact of Reflective Practice on Teaching Improvement

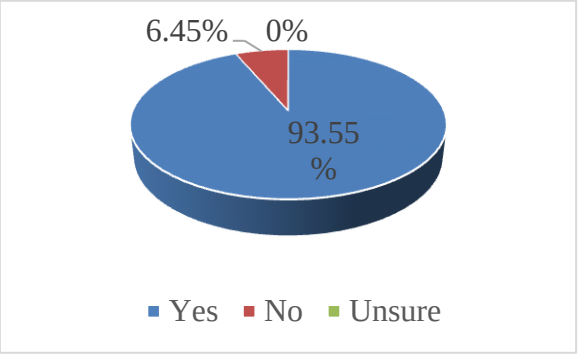


Q8. Would you be interested in receiving more training or resources on reflective models?

The majority of respondents (93.55%) expressed interest in further training on reflective models, indicating a strong willingness to engage more deeply with structured reflective frameworks if opportunities are provided. This finding is consistent with the limited actual use of reflective models reported in Q2, suggesting that the low implementation rate may be linked to insufficient training or exposure rather than a lack of willingness. In this sense, teachers appear open to adopting formal reflective models,

even though they may currently rely more on intuitive or informal reflective practices, as reflected in Q7.

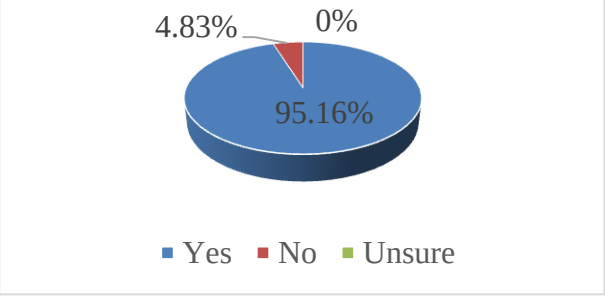
Fig.6. Interest in Training or Resources on Reflective Models



Q9. Do you think reflective models should be integrated into teacher education curricula?

Most participants (95.16%) agreed that reflective models should be integrated into teacher education, suggesting a broad recognition of their value for professional growth.

Fig.7. Integration of Reflective Models into Teacher Education Curricula



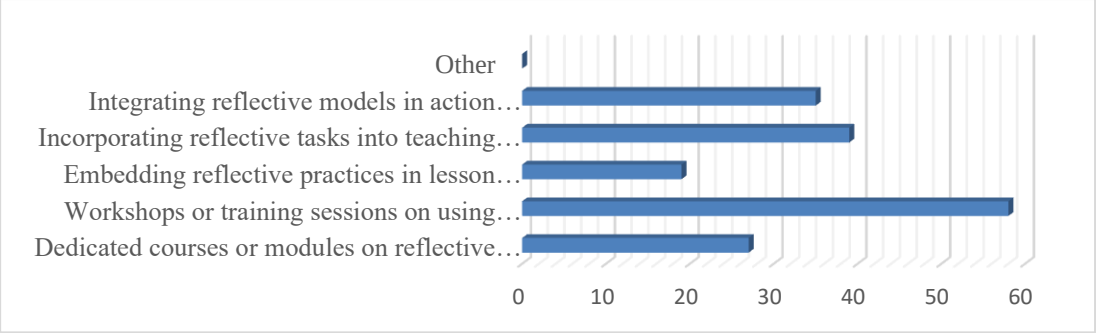
Q10. How do you think reflective models can be systematically integrated into teacher education programmes?

The data gathered from 62 Algerian university EFL teachers highlights various perspectives on how reflective models can be systematically integrated into teacher education programmes. The most widely supported approach, endorsed by 58 participants, is the organisation of workshops or training sessions focused on the practical application of reflective models. This suggests a strong preference for ongoing professional development that emphasises hands-on engagement and skill-building. Incorporating reflective tasks into teaching practicum or internships was supported by 39 teachers, indicating the value placed on experiential learning and the role of real-world teaching contexts in fostering reflective habits .

Similarly, 35 participants advocated for the integration of reflective models into action research projects, emphasising the importance of inquiry-based practice as a

means of critical reflection. A smaller proportion of respondents (27 participants) recommended the inclusion of dedicated courses or modules on reflective practice, while only 19 participants suggested embedding reflective elements into lesson planning and teaching evaluations. These findings reflect a general inclination towards practice-oriented, flexible, and contextually embedded strategies for promoting reflection, as opposed to more formal, curriculum-bound approaches. Overall, the data underscores the belief that reflective practice is most effectively cultivated through active engagement, experiential learning, and continuous professional growth.

Fig.8. Systematic Integration of Reflective Models into Teacher Education Programmes



5. Discussion

The findings of this study highlight a significant gap in Algerian EFL university teachers' familiarity with and use of reflective models, despite a strong recognition of their value. The limited awareness of formal models, where 66.13% of participants reported knowing none, echoes similar findings by Farrell (2016), who noted that many teachers engage in intuitive reflection without grounding it in theoretical frameworks. The dominance of Gibbs' Reflective Cycle among those who identified a model aligns with its frequent appearance in teacher training literature (Moon, 2004), yet the overall lack of variety points to a narrow conceptual understanding of reflective practice.

While 75.8% of participants acknowledged that reflection improves their teaching, only 19.35% reported regular use of reflective models, confirming the well-documented gap between theoretical appreciation and practical application (Larrivee, 2000). Barriers such as time constraints, lack of training, and limited access to resources were consistent with challenges identified in previous studies conducted in similar under-resourced contexts (Zeichner & Liston, 1996; Borg, 2015). Notably, participants expressed a preference for informal methods like self-assessment and group discussion, reinforcing Boud et al.'s (1985) argument that reflection often occurs more naturally in dialogic and collaborative spaces.

Despite these challenges, the overwhelming interest in further training (93.55%) and support for integrating reflective models into teacher education curricula (95.16%) suggests a readiness among Algerian EFL educators to embrace more structured and research-informed approaches. The preference for workshops, practicum-based tasks, and action research over formal coursework reflects a broader pedagogical shift towards

experiential and situated teacher development (Schön, 1983; Burns, 2010). Overall, the findings underscore the urgent need to design reflective training that is both context-sensitive and practically grounded, ensuring teachers are equipped not only with the knowledge but also the tools to engage in meaningful and sustained reflective practice.

5.1 Comparative Insights into Reflective Models

The comparative analysis of reflective models reveals their distinct strengths and weaknesses. Gibbs' Reflective Cycle and Driscoll's Model are straightforward and practical, making them accessible for teachers with limited time. In contrast, models such as Johns' and Schön's offer deeper insights but demand more effort and familiarity to implement effectively. Brookfield's Four Lenses provides a comprehensive approach by considering multiple perspectives, which can enrich the reflective process. Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle emphasises learning through experience, aligning well with active and experiential teaching methods.

In the Algerian context, where time and resources are often constrained, simpler models like Gibbs' and Driscoll's may be more immediately practical. However, incorporating training on more in-depth models like Johns' or Brookfield's could help teachers develop the skills necessary for deeper reflection and long-term professional growth. These models, when applied systematically, have the potential to significantly enhance teaching practices and foster a culture of continuous professional development in Algerian EFL university classrooms.

5.2 Addressing Research Questions

1. In what ways do different reflective models foster critical self-awareness among Algerian EFL teachers?

The study reveals that while most Algerian EFL teachers understand the importance of reflection, their engagement with structured reflective models is limited. Many teachers practice reflection intuitively, without adhering to a specific model, which allows them to develop some degree of self-awareness but lacks the depth and consistency that structured models provide. This sporadic use of reflective practices indicates that critical self-awareness is not yet a regular part of many teachers' professional routines. The barriers of time constraints, unfamiliarity with models, and limited institutional support impede teachers from consistently applying reflective models in their practice.

2. What are the strengths and weaknesses of these reflective models in the Algerian EFL context?

Among the structured reflective models, Gibbs' Reflective Cycle and Johns' Model for Structured Reflection were the most recognised. Gibbs' model is valued for its systematic, step-by-step approach, which aids in developing self-awareness and guiding professional growth. However, some teachers expressed concerns about the time-consuming nature of this model, particularly when managing heavy workloads. Johns' model is also appreciated for its focus on deep, critical reflection, but its complexity and

the need for thorough training make it less commonly used. Other models, such as Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle and Brookfield's Four Lenses, received less attention, suggesting that teachers may require more exposure to these models in teacher education programmes.

3. How do these reflective models contribute to the improvement of EFL teaching practices?

When used effectively, reflective models can significantly enhance EFL teaching practices by fostering self-awareness, aiding in lesson planning, and encouraging the analysis of teaching strategies. Gibbs' Reflective Cycle, for example, helps teachers to evaluate their experiences, draw meaningful conclusions, and plan concrete actions for improvement. Similarly, Johns' model helps teachers examine their ethical and contextual decisions, leading to more informed, student-centered teaching. However, the limited and inconsistent use of these models reduces their potential impact, meaning that teachers relying on intuitive reflection may miss opportunities for deeper, structured analysis and professional growth.

4. To what extent are Algerian EFL teachers familiar with these models and how are they currently using them in their teaching practices?

The findings suggest that familiarity with reflective models among Algerian EFL teachers is generally limited, as the majority of respondents (66.13%) reported no familiarity with the listed models in Q1. Among those who indicated some awareness, Gibbs' Reflective Cycle was the most recognised, followed by Kolb's model, while Brookfield's and Johns' models were less frequently identified. In terms of classroom application, the results show that reflective models are not systematically used in teaching practice, with most teachers reporting either occasional use or no use at all. This suggests a clear gap between limited exposure to formal reflective frameworks and their practical implementation in EFL contexts. The findings further indicate that the absence of structured training on reflective models may contribute to both low familiarity and limited classroom use.

5. What challenges do teachers face when implementing reflective practices in their classrooms?

The key challenges reported by participants include time constraints, lack of structured guidance, limited resources, and insufficient feedback from peers or supervisors. These issues are exacerbated by the demanding teaching environment in Algerian universities, which includes large class sizes, diverse student needs, and heavy workloads. Moreover, the lack of formal training in reflective practices leaves teachers unsure about how to implement these models effectively. Some teachers also reported a lack of motivation or awareness, which further highlights the need for institutional interventions to support the consistent use of reflective practices.

6. CONCLUSION

This study aimed to explore the role of reflective practices in enhancing the professional development of Algerian EFL university teachers. By examining the use of

various reflective models, such as Gibbs' Reflective Cycle, Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle, and Schön's Reflective Practice, the research sought to understand how these models could support teachers in critically assessing their teaching methods, improving their pedagogical strategies, and addressing classroom challenges. It also investigated teachers' familiarity with these models, their actual classroom use, and the perceived barriers to their implementation.

The findings reveal a complex but coherent pattern in teachers' reflective practices. First, familiarity with formal reflective models is generally limited, as a majority of participants reported no exposure to the listed frameworks. This limited awareness is reflected in classroom practice, where the use of structured reflective models remains infrequent, with most teachers reporting either occasional or no use. However, despite this limited engagement with formal models, the data also show that teachers perceive reflection as beneficial to their teaching, suggesting that reflective thinking may occur in an informal or intuitive manner rather than through systematic frameworks. In addition, the strong interest in receiving further training indicates a clear willingness among teachers to engage more deeply with structured reflective approaches, highlighting a gap between limited training opportunities and positive professional attitudes toward development.

Overall, these findings suggest that the main issue is not resistance to reflective practice, but rather a lack of structured exposure and institutional support for formal reflective models. Models such as Gibbs' Reflective Cycle may be more recognised due to their accessibility and structured format, yet their integration into daily teaching practice remains limited. This gap highlights the need for targeted professional development initiatives, including training workshops, mentoring, and institutional support mechanisms that encourage systematic reflection.

In conclusion, this study emphasises that while reflective awareness exists among Algerian EFL university teachers, it is largely informal and under-structured. Strengthening the integration of reflective models into teacher education programmes could help transform this intuitive reflection into a more systematic and developmental professional practice, ultimately contributing to improved teaching quality and more effective learning environments.

Implications and Recommendations for Enhancing Reflective Practices

Reflective practice is fundamental to improving the effectiveness of EFL educators and fostering professional growth. This study underscores the need to make reflection an integral component of teacher education. Teacher training programmes should explicitly incorporate reflective models into their curricula, guiding teachers to critically analyse their practice, recognise areas for improvement, and adapt their methods to learners' needs. Embedding reflection into coursework and practicum experiences, supported by concrete examples of classroom application, can help future teachers view reflection not as an isolated task but as a continuous habit of mind. Allocating dedicated time for

reflection in both pre-service and in-service contexts is essential to sustain this process and encourage systematic self-evaluation.

Collaboration is equally important for developing reflective practitioners. Peer observation, mentoring, and professional dialogue enable teachers to exchange experiences and co-construct new insights. Such collective reflection cultivates a supportive community of practice that promotes shared learning and continuous improvement. Incorporating student feedback into reflection further enriches teachers' understanding, offering valuable perspectives on the effectiveness of their approaches and classroom interactions.

For individual teachers, beginning with accessible frameworks such as Gibbs' Reflective Cycle or Driscoll's Model can make reflection more structured and purposeful. Teachers should regularly set aside brief moments after lessons to consider what worked well, what challenges emerged, and how they might adapt in future sessions. Simple strategies (e.g., like maintaining reflective journals or recording short reflections) help transform reflection into a sustainable routine. Collaborative exchanges with colleagues, through informal discussions or structured reflection groups, can also inspire fresh perspectives and reinforce reflective habits.

Digital tools can further enhance this process. Online journals, lesson recordings, or digital portfolios allow teachers to document and revisit their reflections, track professional progress, and identify recurring themes in their practice. Institutional support is crucial to maintain this culture of reflection. Schools and universities should provide mentoring opportunities, training on reflective models, and time within professional development schedules specifically devoted to reflection.

Ultimately, reflection empowers teachers to remain responsive, innovative, and attuned to learners' needs. It bridges theory and practice, enabling educators to transform experience into growth. By embedding reflection at the heart of teacher education and professional life, institutions can nurture adaptable, thoughtful educators who foster more dynamic and effective learning environments.

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