

# Teachers Helping Teachers

One of the things about teaching that keeps me going as a teacher is the idea that the classroom is not only a place where students learn but also a place where teachers learn, too. Of course, I can try to reflect on my own learning while I teach, but I find working with other colleagues the most beneficial way for me to develop. This article looks at three ways teachers can help each other reflect: mentorship, team teaching, and peer coaching.

## Mentorship

Research has indicated that beginning teachers who are mentored are more effective teachers in their early years and are more likely to remain in teaching, since they learn from guided practice rather than depending upon trial-and-error alone. Teachers help each other learn when more-experienced or more-effective teachers serve as mentors for peers. The mentor-mentee relationship need not be one in which a gap exists between the two in terms of experience. Two teachers at the same experience level and same rank in the teaching hierarchy can form a critical friendship. A critical friend acts as an observer who can talk about teaching in a collaborative undertaking and give advice as a friend in order to develop the reflective abilities of the teacher who is conducting their own action research.

## Team Teaching

Team teaching is a type of critical friendship arrangement whereby two or more teachers cooperate as equals as they take responsibility for planning, teaching, and evaluating a class, a series of classes, or a whole course. Team-teaching arrangements that teams can choose from, depending on what best meets their needs, can be any of the following: (a) *Equal partners*: Both teachers see themselves as having an equal experiences and knowledge, and so, all decisions are shared equally for all stages of the lesson: planning, delivery, monitoring, and checking. (b) *Leader and participant*: One teacher is given or assumes a leadership role because they have more experience than the other with team teaching. (c) *Native/Advanced speaker and less proficient speaker*: In some situations (such as in Korea's EPIK program), a native English-language speaker or an advanced speaker of English may team teach with a less proficient speaker.

## Peer Coaching

Although similar in many ways, peer coaching, another form of critical friendship, is actually different than team teaching because its main aim is for one teacher to help another improve their teaching. In a peer-coaching arrangement there is no evaluation, no supervising, just a professional collaboration in which one teacher wants another peer to observe their class in

order to obtain feedback on one specific aspect of teaching or learning. The peer, acting as coach/friend (see above), offers suggestions to a colleague based on classroom observations. Teachers make their own decisions as to what changes, if any, to incorporate into their teaching. In other words, each teacher still has the main responsibility to develop and does not hand over control to a colleague. An example of this is when the coach observes the fellow teacher and makes a record of the

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observation. Depending on the amount of detail required by the teacher and the focus of the observation, which is decided by the teacher (not the coach), both will reflect on practice. The classroom observation may be assisted by the following data gathering instruments: audiotape, videotape, classroom transcriptions. Both parties may reflect on the whole process by engaging in journal writing and discussions. Both participants should write down their reflections of the process and what was achieved. They should then meet and discuss what was written and what was achieved.

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## Critical friendships are critical for teacher development.

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Teachers, like others outside of formal education, learn in a contextualized manner, and they learn best when studying areas important to their lives. Mentorship, team teaching, and peer coaching are three excellent methods for teachers to use in helping each other reflect on practice.

## Reference

Farrell, T.S.C. (2007). *Reflective language teaching: From research to practice*. London: Continuum.

## The Author



**Thomas S. C. Farrell** is Professor of Applied Linguistics at Brock University, Canada. His professional interests include Reflective Practice, and Language Teacher Education and Development. The early part of Dr. Farrell's teaching career was spent teaching in Seoul. Dr. Farrell was a speaker at the 2010 PAC-KOTESOL International Conference in Seoul this October. Email: [tfarrell@brocku.ca](mailto:tfarrell@brocku.ca)



## Who Is the Self That Teaches?

I just arrived back in Canada recently after a wonderful trip to Asia that included Singapore and Korea. While in both locations, I was reminded of the vibrancy of Asia that I miss while living in North America. This vibrancy was fully visible to me also while I was at the Korea TESOL/PAC Conference on the weekend of October 16-17 in Seoul.

At the conference, I was honored and delighted to be asked to give a plenary on Day 2 (Sunday) and was impressed by the turnout. My talk was on role identity: the roles we give ourselves or the roles others thrust on us. My reason for talking about this topic is that it is an area of our work that many reflective teachers forget to look at. Reflective teachers, for example, usually ask the *what, why, where, and how* questions, but we sometimes forget to ask the *who* question: *who* is the self that teaches? If we look at the acronyms TESOL or TESL, the “T” comes first – and that is the teacher. Teachers often act in the isolation of their classrooms for so many hours of the day that they can lose sight of who they are, their integrity, and their identity, and the various roles they play or are asked to play. Many times they may feel that they are acting alone without much support or collaboration because they spend so much time “alone” in the classroom each day. Try this reflection: think about how many hours you spent teaching in a class last week *alone*, without any other teacher helping you, and compare this to how much time you spent talking to other teachers in the school and during school time about your practice. I will wager that the former takes up much more of your time. So my plenary focused on the *who* question of reflective practice.

Using some research I have nearly completed here in Canada with three experienced and wonderful ESL college teachers as a backdrop, I pointed out that 16 roles emerged from their reflections, roles such as *entertainer, social worker, learner*. These divided into three main clusters: the *Teacher as Manager* (roles inside the classroom), the *Teacher as Professional* (roles within the teacher), and the *Teacher as Acculturator* (a term coined for roles outside the classroom). I suggested that this latter cluster and role may be a distinguishing role for TESOL professionals. What I also mentioned was that our roles as TESOL professionals are often hidden and controversial if we do not reflect consciously. We should be aware of these roles because some administrators may be thrusting roles on us that we may not be fully comfortable with. Indeed, a main focus of my talk was a realization that the *who* question, who is the self that teaches, is a very important one if we are not to reduce teaching to only technique or method, because good teaching comes from *who* we are as teachers, our integrity, and our


identity. One reflective question that I regularly consider is *In spite of moments of doubt about continuing as a teacher, I continue because...* I reflect on this question regularly because it has gotten me through some *s t r a n g e* experiences, such as my surviving the collapse of *S e o u l ’ s* *S e o n g s u* Bridge, which happened at 7:40 a.m. on Friday, October 21, 1994, causing 32 poor souls to perish. I reflect on that question regularly because I drove over that bridge at 7:39 that same morning, just before it collapsed, on my way to observe a language teacher. I feel that I must have been destined to perform my role as a language teacher educator as I have done since that fateful morning all those years ago. This is also one of the many reasons I love returning to Korea and Korea TESOL: to give back. Many thanks to all for your warm welcome this year as well.

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By Thomas S. C. Farrell

#### The Author



**Thomas S. C. Farrell** is Professor of Applied Linguistics at Brock University, Canada. His professional interests include *Reflective Practice, and Language Teacher Education and Development*. The early part of Dr. Farrell’s teaching career was spent teaching in Seoul. Dr. Farrell was a speaker at the 2010 PAC-KOTESOL International Conference in Seoul this October. Email: [tfarrell@brocku.ca](mailto:tfarrell@brocku.ca) 

### A Quote to Ponder

**“We cannot really teach a language; we can only create conditions under which it will develop in the mind in its own way.”**

Wilhelm von Humboldt, *On Language* (1836), paraphrased by Noam Chomsky and cited in B. Kumaravadevelu (2003, p. 44), *Beyond Methods: Macrostrategies for Language Teaching*.

# Language Teacher Evaluation

**H**ave you been evaluated recently? How did you feel at the end of the evaluation process? Were you satisfied that your supervisor really knew you as a teacher? Did you learn anything about yourself as a teacher? The usual answer to the last question is that teachers feel dissatisfied: that the supervisor really does not know them as a teacher and that they do not get anything out of these evaluations. In this article, I propose that if teacher evaluations are conducted through reflective practice, everyone wins: the teachers learn about themselves and their teaching, and the supervisor learns about the teacher and the teacher's class.

## Teacher Evaluation and Reflective Practice

Current teacher evaluation methods usually consist of one or two "walk-throughs" and observations by supervisors. They then make judgments, based on these observations, about the teachers' instructional materials and teaching methods, and also the students' learning behaviors. Then, they provide suggestions on how a particular teacher can/should improve teaching performance. Teachers who have been evaluated many times in such a manner, however, maintain that these evaluations are biased by the supervisors' subjectivity because the supervisors do not know the teacher's particular class, their students, or their learning characteristics. Indeed, many teachers have "confessed" to having a "canned lesson" ready for each of the evaluations, a lesson that is designed to demonstrate all the behaviors on the checklist and one in which the students have been coached before the observation. In addition, many supervisors and principals themselves privately say that they also feel the burden of having to conduct teacher evaluations because they have, in many cases, long left day-to-day teaching and as such, may not be well-equipped to evaluate all teachers. So they too can sense a lack of trust between the supervisor and the teachers. As a result, nobody is happy with what actually transpires in these evaluation sessions.

Both teachers and supervisors agree that they need to use a system that is aimed not only at evaluating teachers but also at fostering the professional development of the teachers. One way of accomplishing this dual purpose (evaluation and professional development) is to adopt a collaborative approach to teacher evaluation where the supervisor/principal invites the teachers to engage in systematic reflective practice so that they can explain their teaching environment and their students' developmental characteristics.

Reflective practice generally means that teachers

subject their beliefs and practices to a critical analysis by engaging in systematic reflections so that they can take more responsibility for their actions (Farrell, 2008). This collaborative approach to teacher evaluation empowers teachers with more autonomy and the opportunity to look for the things in their teaching that are most important to them (as in self-reflection) rather than following a checklist prepared by others for a classroom observation. Teachers are thus more motivated to engage in self-assessment because they have more say in what is assessed, so this collaborative approach helps to lessen beliefs many teachers have concerning the one-sidedness of their evaluations. Teacher evaluation through reflective practice has a developmental, as well as an evaluative, focus because the teachers are given the autonomy to decide what they want to reflect on, and formulate goals and/or action plans to do so. All these can be presented in a teacher portfolio and discussed collaboratively with the supervisor and/or principal (see Farrell (2008) for more details on Reflective Practice activities).

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## Conclusion

When teachers engage in systematic reflective practice, they tend to revamp their practices, to lead to a higher quality of teaching that in turn can positively impact the degree of student learning. The implications of a collaborative approach to teacher evaluation and teacher professional development highlight the need for developing a school culture where reflective practice is encouraged and supported in the form of professional learning communities that facilitate student learning.

## Reference

Farrell, T. S. C. (2008). *Reflective language teaching: From research to practice*. London: Continuum Press.

## The Author



**Thomas S. C. Farrell** is Professor of Applied Linguistics at Brock University, Canada. His professional interests include Reflective Practice, and Language Teacher Education and Development. The early part of Dr. Farrell's teaching career was spent teaching in Seoul. Dr. Farrell will be a speaker at the 2010 PAC-KOTESOL International Conference in Seoul this October. Email: [tfarrell@brocku.ca](mailto:tfarrell@brocku.ca)

## ER: Proceed with Caution (Part II)

In the previous edition of *TEC*, I talked about extensive reading in terms of what it is and how one can consider using it in second language classes. This article, Part II, outlines what we can consider doing after reading extensively so that we can engage our students in interesting post-extensive reflective reading activities that do not test their comprehension in the usual boring ten-question format.

### What Should We Do After Reading Extensively?

The main purpose of extensive reading is to encourage our students to develop an interest in and a habit for reading on their own so that they can move from learning to read to reading to learn. In order to accomplish this, we must be careful not to build in extra pressures of testing or grades. If extensive reading is to be for pleasure, then we must beware of the possibility of spoiling this enjoyment of reading for pleasure by not asking our students comprehension questions and not asking them to write mindless summaries of the books they have read: How would you like to have to write a summary of the latest fiction book you have read? Of course, if all the students are reading the same class book, then the teacher could also read it and this makes checking the impact of that book easier. But different groups can read different books and engage in different class activities that can be compared. Each student should keep a reading log of some sort about the material they are reading so that they can draw on that information when discussing aspects of the book they have read. Then each class member can be asked to work individually or in pairs or groups to complete any of the following activities:

1) Write a reaction letter to the author of the book, ask questions about the book, and give comments about what you liked and did not like. 2) Make a movie. "The Movie Version" (Farrell, 2004) is an activity where students cast actors and draw a poster for a movie based on a book they have read. "The Movie Version" is one alternative to the "boring book report," as it is very popular with students. 3) Students can also make a poster for the "movie-of-the-book" and/or redesign and make a new book cover. Rather than a movie, students could also consider making a radio play from the story.

### Having Proceeded With Caution

I will end this article with a caution for all because extensive reading has taken on somewhat of a

bandwagon call, with ELT reading circles as the cure-all for the difficulties students encounter when learning English as a second language, where some think it can and maybe should replace instruction. Yes, extensive reading can be a great way to promote autonomous reading. However, it should augment

existing intensive reading instruction and not replace it. Simply providing time for students to read, a common

misinterpretation of extensive reading, will not guarantee that students will develop their reading skills. Rather, an extensive reading program should be carefully designed so that students can put into practice reading strategies they have been explicitly taught in their intensive reading classes so that they can become more autonomous readers.

Many of the problems learners face in learning to read in English are related to common instructional methods that often test, rather than teach, reading, and thereby, fail to foster a fondness for reading within learners. Additionally, many teaching methods fall short of fully accounting for the differences between learning to read in a first and second language. Extensive reading strategies offer ways in which teachers can cultivate not only reading skills and text comprehension, but also an interest in reading in English.

### References

- Farrell, T. S. C. (2004). The movie version. In R. R. Day & J. Bamford, *Extensive reading activities for teaching language*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Farrell, T. S. C. (2008). *Teaching reading to English language learners: A reflective approach*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

### The Author



**Thomas S. C. Farrell** is Professor of Applied Linguistics at Brock University, Canada. His professional interests include Reflective Practice, and Language Teacher Education and Development. The early part of Dr. Farrell's teaching career was spent teaching in Seoul. Dr. Farrell will be a speaker at the 2010 PAC-KOTESOL International Conference in Seoul this October. Email: [tjfarrell@brocku.ca](mailto:tjfarrell@brocku.ca)

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## ER: Proceed with Caution (Part I)

Recently I read an excellent discussion on the topic of extensive reading in the Korean context in *The English Connection*. In this column, I would also like to add some of my reflections on how we can further promote extensive reading. When I taught in Korea (18 years) in the early part of my career, I attempted to introduce extensive reading, but it was a hard sell because many wondered about its value and how to “control” it with assignments and the like. There were misconceptions then, many of which still exist, about what extensive reading is and how it should be conducted. I will revisit these issues as they relate to extensive reading and what we know from current research in two parts. I take much of this from my recent book on reading (Farrell, 2008), should you want to see more.

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*Extensive reading calls for minimal intervention from the teacher because it involves having our students read materials that interest them.*

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### **What is Extensive Reading?**

An obvious start to this discussion is to contrast extensive reading with intensive reading, where we teach reading explicitly and directly in the classroom to our students so that they can decode different types of texts. Intensive reading calls for maximum intervention by the teacher in the class. In contrast, extensive reading calls for minimal intervention from the teacher because it usually involves having our students read materials that interest them (for information and/or pleasure) with no great focus on the language within the text itself. The idea of having extensive reading in our English language education programs is that it can help improve our students' overall reading performance (especially beginning students) by enhancing incidental language learning in such areas as spelling, vocabulary, grammar, and text structure.

### **How Should We Conduct Extensive Reading?**

Extensive reading can be conducted in class and/or after class. When conducted in class, the students usually read silently (called Sustained Silent Reading [SSR] practice) and at their own pace. During this SSR time, teachers can help select a book, answer questions from learners, and observe learners' reactions toward

reading. However, the teacher-student conversations should not disturb the other students who are reading. So what should the teacher do during this time? In my opinion, while the students are reading extensively in class, the reading teacher should also read in the class. When students see that the teacher is reading, they may become curious about the book he or she is reading and may thus ask questions about the material. Reading teachers can then answer their students' questions, explain what they are reading and why they like this type of book, and explain that their reading interests may be different than their students' interests.

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Research has indicated that when extensive reading is used to build fluency, nearly all the words of the text the students are reading should be known to them. When the purpose of extensive reading is for language growth, then about 95 per cent of the words in the text they are reading should be known. So, for extensive reading it is better that our students read lots of easy texts, which keep their language difficulty within the learners' reading competence, rather than more difficult ones, especially for those students who lack confidence in reading. Of course, a controversial issue is: Who chooses the reading materials - teachers or students? It is best that students choose what they want to read because our (teachers') interests are different than our students' interests. But what if they choose materials we consider inappropriate? What would you say if your students wanted to read comic books or an x-rated magazine because they said they were interested in these materials?

This article has offered a few tips on conducting ER, but the discussion will continue in the Summer issue of *TEC*, where I will address how teachers can proceed after introducing an extensive reading program.

### **Reference**

Farrell, T. S. C. (2008). *Teaching reading to English language learners: A reflective guide*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press (Sage).



### **The Author**

**Thomas S. C. Farrell** is Professor of Applied Linguistics at Brock University, Canada. His professional interests include Reflective Practice, and Language Teacher Education and Development. Email: [tfarrell@brocku.ca](mailto:tfarrell@brocku.ca)

# Reflecting on Teaching Grammar

In the last issue, I said I would focus on reflective practice regarding teaching the skill areas. The first one I will talk about is teaching grammar. There is no general agreement in linguistic circles about how to define the term *grammar*. In fact, grammar's exact role in English lessons is still not commonly agreed upon: Those who say we should teach it don't agree on how to teach it, while others say we should never teach grammar in class because children learning their first language never take grammar lessons from their caregivers. Recently, there has been a movement in some countries to question the communicative approach and to call for a reintroduction of grammar instruction because students still make grammar mistakes. This may be linked to a lack of explicit instruction in grammar.

## What Is Grammar?

The grammar we see in books can differ from what native speakers of a language actually use. The rules are often set by linguists or grammar experts and outline what tradition dictates grammar should be. This is *prescriptive* grammar, whereas how native speakers of a language use it in real life is called *descriptive* grammar. This is an important distinction for teachers to consider because we must consider one other type of grammar for our students: *pedagogical* grammar, the grammar we ask our students to learn.

## Should We Teach Grammar?

This is a tricky question to answer. Teaching grammar is usually done in reaction to student errors, with the belief that if you teach grammar overtly, then the students will make fewer mistakes. However, teaching students rules and correcting their every error does not help language learners avoid these errors. It can even impede language production by making the student focus on form at the expense of communication. So, what are English teachers to do? Some teachers teach grammar because it is easy to teach and easier to test than, say, speaking or writing. Other teachers say the most common reason for teaching grammar is that it gives a system for analyzing and labeling sentences. For decades, however, research has demonstrated that teaching grammar rarely accomplishes such practical goals because few students learn the rules of grammar well. Even if they do manage to learn these, many still fail to transfer the grammar they have learned to improve their speaking or edit their writing.

## Ways of Teaching Grammar

Grammar can be taught inductively or deductively. An inductive approach to teaching grammar is seen as a method in which the students' attention is focused on examples of actual usage and the students are required to discover for themselves the underlying structure,

while a deductive approach to teaching grammar is one where students are shown the rules of the grammatical form before they are given examples in actual usage. So, which approach should we use? Should we encourage our students to try to infer grammar rules from examples, or tell them explicitly what the rules are? I would say that each teacher in each context, because he or she knows the students' language needs best, should design activities for lessons of English grammar that best suit those needs. The following guidelines may be useful to remember when preparing lessons for a grammar class: (a) Know what type of grammar you want to teach in the lesson; (b) Time and plan your grammar lessons; (c) Decide how much grammar metalanguage you want to introduce in each lesson; and (d) Let the students help with the construction of the grammar lessons.

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## Conclusion


Grammar is sometimes considered a *dirty* word in language teaching because of the huge swings in teaching methodology in the past from an emphasis on teaching grammar as the language lesson to more communicative lessons where grammar is not even discussed. It may be a good idea for all teachers to know the grammar rules so that they are able to use these as a metalanguage to talk to students, regardless of whether they teach it inductively or deductively. For more ideas on teaching grammar see chapter 4, Farrell (2006).

## Reference

Farrell, T. S. C. (2006). *Succeeding with English language learners: A guide for beginning teachers*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

## The Author



**Thomas S. C. Farrell** is Professor of Applied Linguistics at Brock University, Canada. His professional interests include Reflective Practice, and Language Teacher Education and Development. Dr. Farrell's recent books are *Reflective Language Teaching: From Research to Practice* (2008, Continuum Press, London) and *Teaching Reading to English Language Learners: A Reflective Guide* (2009, Corwin Press, Sage Publications). Web page: <http://www.brocku.ca/appliedlinguistics/viewpeople.php?id=1&view=all>. Email: [tfarrell@brocku.ca](mailto:tfarrell@brocku.ca) 

## Korean ELT: What Does it Mean?

I read in recent press articles in Korea that English teachers have actually been called “Vampires”! I also read that they have been called many other titles, as it seems that many Koreans still think English teachers (native English speakers) are not professional and are only here to make money. I spent 18 years in Korea and, when I left for Singapore in 1997, similar sentiments were expressed by Koreans in the newspapers. It seems that things have not changed much. So, in this article, I would like to get to the basics of what an English teacher is: because one cannot develop as an ESL teacher if one does not know what an ESL teacher really is. I am treating the term “English teacher” as someone who is untrained because, like it or not, many so-called ‘native English speakers’ come to Korea and become instant English teachers and this is where I start real professional development discussions.

Some employers in Korea and elsewhere think, “If you speak English, you can teach it.” Is this true? If it is true, then we can also say that all 50 million plus Korean nationals are automatically Korean language teachers from childhood, with more than one billion teachers of the Chinese language across the waters from Korea, and so on.

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### *ESL teachers have many possible functions and roles in Korea.*

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Okay, now let us look at an ESL teacher from the perspective of the so-called native speaker ESL teacher. A native speaker of English walks into a room full of students and becomes an instant English “teacher.” The class begins, and we assume language learning takes place. In fact, some Korean employers (and the teachers themselves) think that all the teachers must do from this point on (as I have heard recently) is to “just talk and keep the students happy.” While I agree that some teachers may actually play this game, I know many in Korea that do more: They actually think about their function and role as a teacher of English in Korea. They see teaching as a highly complex process which requires different challenges in each class. Even people who enter the classroom for the first time (be they motor mechanics or the like in a previous life) and become instant “English teachers” soon realize that “just talking” wears thin and wears them down fast.

These “teachers” begin to see how complex teaching really is, and may come up with questions such as: How much do I talk, and is this good? How many questions

do I ask? What kinds of questions do I ask? Do I know the answer or not, and should I ask more or less *known* questions or *unknown* questions? What kind of seating arrangements do I use? Should I change them, and have I changed them recently? What kind of language do I use? Is it comprehensible? Should I teach grammar? If not, why not? If yes, do I teach the past tense first, then the present, and then the future; and will they learn in this order? This is, in fact, the beginning of their professional development and, in order to answer them, the “teachers” must read in such subject areas as Second Language Acquisition Theory, Teaching Methodology, Learning Strategies, Applied Linguistics, Motivational Theories, Sociolinguistics, and various Psychological Theories, while becoming aware of all the cross-cultural issues involved in teaching English as a second language in Korea. Now these “teachers” begin to see that there is a lot more involved than just going into a classroom and talking. They soon realize that ESL teachers have many possible functions/roles in Korea such as: cross-cultural expert, counselor, discussion leader, grammarian, curriculum planner, oral interviewer, language authority, language model, disciplinarian, needs assessor, language tester, and many more.

I think that, whether trained or untrained, English language teachers, and even Korean administrators, will agree that there is a lot more to teaching English as a second or foreign language than just going into a class and talking because one is a native speaker of the language. In future columns, I will explore how teachers can develop in specific skill areas of teaching English, such as speaking, reading, writing, and listening.

### **The Author**



**Thomas S. C. Farrell** is Professor of Applied Linguistics at Brock University, Canada. His professional interests include *Reflective Practice*, and *Language Teacher Education and Development*. Dr. Farrell’s recent books are *Reflective Language Teaching: From Research to Practice* (2008, Continuum Press, London) and *Teaching Reading to English Language Learners: A Reflective Guide* (2009, Corwin Press, Sage Publications; Web page: <http://www.brocku.ca/appliedlinguistics/viewpeople.php?id=1&view=all>). Email: [tfarrell@brocku.ca](mailto:tfarrell@brocku.ca)

## Professional Development

By Thomas S.C. Farrell

# Looking At Your Own Classroom

In this article I would like to recommend to teachers in Korea how they can make use of an outlet within the main TESOL organization to publish their reflections on their *own* teaching. I emphasize the word *own* because, more often than not, professional development for many teachers has often consisted of district, school/institution, or administration mandated courses and/or one-stop workshops conducted in a top-down approach (usually by outside “experts”) which teachers are subsequently expected (regardless of context) to translate into action in order to improve perceived weaknesses in their practice. In other words, teachers have been researched by someone outside their classroom and “diagnosed” with ideas for improving their practice.

I have had the privilege of being Series Editor for TESOL’s *Language Teacher Research (LTR) Series*, a six-volume series that included studies of LTR in such diverse regions as Africa, Americas, Asia, Australia/New Zealand, Europe, and the Middle East (see TESOL’s publications for more details). The series was developed so that language teachers and language teacher educators at all levels of expertise around the world could have a forum to carry out and share research on their own practices in their *own* context. Now a “new” (actually an old one that has been revived) journal has been started by TESOL, called *TESOL Journal (TJ)*, and within this journal, I am editing a subsection called “Language Teacher Research.”

Language Teacher Research as it is envisioned in *TJ* includes inquiries that are systematic (see guidelines

below) and intentional, and features accounts of teachers at all levels researching their *own* practice (not other teachers’ practice). This Language Teacher Research section aims to continue to provide such a structured forum for language teachers and language teacher educators in all regions of the world. So that the research accounts are readable and accessible to all language teachers the template guidelines in the box below, which are similar to the original LTR series, must be followed by all contributors.

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I look forward to reviewing as many articles as possible from teachers in Korea reflecting on their own practice.

### The Author



**Thomas S. C. Farrell** is Professor of Applied Linguistics at Brock University, Canada. His professional interests include Reflective Practice, and Language Teacher Education and Development. Dr. Farrell’s recent books are *Reflective Language Teaching: From Research to Practice* (2008, Continuum Press, London) and *Teaching Reading to English Language Learners: A Reflective Guide* (2009, Corwin Press, Sage Publications; Web page: <http://www.brocku.ca/appliedlinguistics/viewpeople.php?id=1&view=all>). Email: [tfarrell@brocku.ca](mailto:tfarrell@brocku.ca)

### Submission Guidelines

**Research Issue:** The statement of the issue includes a brief description of the context and the participants. It answers the question “Why is this issue important to you?” Issues do not have to be framed as problems. You are encouraged to identify and express what you see as important to the situated nature of your work.

**Background Literature:** This brief review of the literature asks you to write only about the background literature relating to the issue you have researched above.

**Procedures:** You then document the exact procedures you fashioned or responses you made to the research issue discussed above. What was the procedure or response taken; why did you take this procedure or response; and where did it come from? How did you implement it? Give as many details as possible here because other teachers may want to replicate your research in different contexts.

**Result:** What are the results of the issue you researched? In this section, you discuss the outcomes and results in detail.

**Reflection:** What have you learned as a result of the whole process? For example, what have you learned about your practice? What have you learned about doing research? Also, at this point, the issue of the situated nature of the work should be revisited: Why do you think the issue is specific to your context?

**Length:** Each submission should be 4,000 to 5,000 words.

For further details: [http://www.tesol.org/s\\_tesol/sec\\_document.asp?CID=1997&DID=12309](http://www.tesol.org/s_tesol/sec_document.asp?CID=1997&DID=12309)



# Teaching Conceptions

I am delighted to have been asked to write this regular column for *TEC* on professional development. In this column, I hope to explore many issues related to professional development. I also hope that you, as readers, can provide some feedback along the way about what you have read and about what you would like to see in this column in the future.

My interest in professional development and in the definition of what it means to be an EFL teacher, stems from the concern I felt while teaching in Seoul over the qualifications of the huge influx of non-Korean travelers into Korea in the 1990s to teach English. I am sure there are teachers in Korea now that are interested in their professional development regardless of their initial qualifications, and so, this column is for all who are teaching English in Korea.

I would like to start this column by encouraging you, the teacher, to look at your current practices to determine what theories or assumptions about teaching and learning you may be working from, either consciously or subconsciously, by trying to situate yourself and your teaching into one of three umbrella conceptions of teaching: (a) Science/Research, (b) Theory/Philosophy, and (c) Art/Craft (Freeman & Richards, 1993). All three take a different stance to the teaching of EFL and go beyond the narrow thinking of teaching as the execution of techniques in the classroom by a teacher.

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## Examining teaching practices and assumptions about learning

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The *Science/Research* conception of teaching sees EFL teaching as guided by research supported by experiments in psychology, from where learning principles are established, and learning strategies are investigated and developed. Task-based instruction is derived from SLA research.

The *Theory/Philosophy* conception sees teaching EFL as based on what ought to work (theory) and what is morally right (values-based teaching). The much-touted communicative method (CLT) is included in this category because it was developed by systematic and principled thinking rather than empirical investigation. Humanistic teaching and learner-centered teaching also come under this conception, and here teaching effectiveness is seen more in terms of belief about what should work rather than any successful application.

In contrast to the first two conceptions, the *Art/Craft* conception of teaching depends on the individual teacher's skill and personality to teach EFL because teachers are allowed to be themselves and act on their own best understanding of what is happening in the classroom with their particular students. A good EFL teacher will describe (in nonjudgmental language) and analyze his or her class and realize that a range of options are available to choose from, depending on the needs of the students. This conception, of course, depends on the teacher and not on the form of teaching.

## Professional Development

By Thomas S.C. Farrell

In summary then, *Science/Research* conceptions offer ready-made, specific solutions to language teaching, *Theory/Philosophy* conceptions offer ready-made general solutions to language teaching, and *Art/Craft* conceptions offer custom-made and self-made solutions to language teaching. Now, do a self-assessment of these three conceptions by rating yourself from 1 (low amount) to 5 (high) on each.

It may be a good idea to share your conception with your colleagues as this may start an interesting process of collegial reflections on your practices. I will be in Korea at the National Conference in May, and I hope to meet some of you while I am there, so we can further discuss professional development. I will be giving a keynote on "Professional Development Through Reflective Practice," if you are interested in coming.


Your comments are welcomed.

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**Thomas S. C. Farrell** is Professor of Applied Linguistics at Brock University, Canada. His professional interests include Reflective Practice, and Language Teacher Education and Development. Dr. Farrell's recent books are *Reflective Language Teaching: From Research to Practice* (2008, Continuum Press, London) and *Teaching Reading to English Language Learners: A Reflective Guide* (2009, Corwin Press, Sage Publications); Web page: <http://www.brocku.ca/appliedlinguistics/viewpeople.php?id=1&view=all>. Email: [tfarrell@brocku.ca](mailto:tfarrell@brocku.ca) 

# Striving for Imperfection

One of my favorite singers, Sam Phillips, has a song whose chorus is simply, “Our ideas of perfect are so imperfect.” And we all know the old saying: “The perfect is the enemy of the good.” So it is with professional development. It may seem odd but when the goal of professional development becomes making some part of your teaching perfect, it can get in the way of actually doing well and may actually prevent progress from happening.

I know this because I am describing myself. When I face some task, even one I want to do, I imagine what the perfect outcome would be. And then I realize that because I am doing the task for the first time or am simply human, I cannot do it that well. Usually, it comes out okay, but never perfect, and probably not as well as it might have if I had accepted my limitations.

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## *Perfectionism is actually the enemy of good professional development.*

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Perfectionism is actually the enemy of good professional development. Stephen Brookfield, in his book *The Skillful Teacher* (2006), points to the importance of learning how our students perceive their learning in order to better understand our teaching. One instrument he uses to learn about his students’ perceptions is the Critical Incident Questionnaire (CIQ). This tool is given to students at the end of each week, and it asks them to indicate at what time in the class they felt most engaged, distanced, puzzled, and surprised, and what action by a teacher or another student they found most helpful or affirming. He points to a number of benefits he gains from using the CIQ in terms of understanding his students and credits it with improving his teaching.

Yet he also points to the danger of what he calls “perfect-ten syndrome.” “The perfect-ten syndrome describes the unreasonable desire to want to collect a batch of critical incident forms at the end of every class that contain no negative comments and a surfeit of compliments” (p. 53). And that this never happens never fails to frustrate him and makes him “die a hundred deaths” (p. 54) at first when he reads the forms each week. He persists because of the value he gets, and warns others considering using this tool that the

goal cannot be:

to score a perfect ten of student satisfaction week after week. The point is to

situate your teaching in an understanding of the emotional, cognitive, and political ebbs and flows of group learning that help you realize why achieving such a score is impossible. (p. 54)

## *Professional Development*

*By Bill Snyder*

Happy are those who can do this. I struggle with it. But I know that I have to get better at it. One part of getting better at being imperfect that I am learning is to set more reasonable goals for myself. Rather than having to write this whole column perfectly (as I am trying but failing to do now), a simpler goal of writing 30 minutes on it per day and trying to improve it until the deadline would be more effective. Writing for thirty minutes is an achievable goal, and, done consistently, will eventually produce a finished product, probably a better one than the last minute rush does. Moving from knowing this abstractly to acting on it is the trick.

Another thing I am learning is to cut back on my total commitments so that I can focus on fewer and do them better. This will, I believe, make me a better teacher. With that in mind, this will be my last Professional Development column for *The English Connection*. Writing each one has made me think and learn more about teaching, and I value the experience. I hope that you have gained as much from reading them as I have in writing them. I wish all the readers who have stuck with me so far the best of luck in your own imperfect professional development.

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### **The Author**



**Bill Snyder**, TESOL/Applied Linguistics Program, Teachers College, Columbia University. Dr. Snyder’s research interests include learner and teacher motivation, and non-native speaker teacher issues in TESOL. He is also Editor-in-Chief of the *Korea TESOL Journal*. Email: [w Snyder7@gmail.com](mailto:w Snyder7@gmail.com).

# Teacher Autonomy

While I was at the AAAL conference in March, I picked up a copy of a new book called *Teacher and Learner Autonomy: Concepts, Realities, and Responses* (Lamb & Reinders, 2008). I was interested in it because my work on teacher motivation has touched on issues of teacher autonomy, and I wanted to know more. Teacher autonomy does not get as much press as learner autonomy, but it has been argued that the development of teacher autonomy is necessary as a foundation for developing learner autonomy. Teacher autonomy involves two concepts: the freedom of teachers to present the curriculum in different ways and the capacity of teachers to direct their own professional development (Benson, 2001).

An article by Jonathon Shaw (2008) in the Lamb and Reinders book challenges the idea of a relationship between teacher and learner autonomy, and in doing so, points to the need for more serious thought about how teacher autonomy, instructional freedom, and professional development are interrelated. What interested me in particular was Shaw's argument that collaboration in professional development may be necessary for developing teacher autonomy.

Shaw is looking at these ideas in terms of his teaching context, a university language center in Thailand. He makes a case that the time constraints on learning the English they need make his students less interested in activities that promote learner autonomy and more interested in direct instruction on the language that they need. As he puts it:

I expect that my students will sooner or later start to work out for themselves the solutions that work for the particular problems they face in attempting to get a masters degree using the English language. My students will become autonomous users of English, because they have to, but autonomous language learners? Students here don't have time for that. (p. 201)

Shaw then further suggests that dogmatic emphasis on promoting learner autonomy has actually had a negative impact on teacher autonomy. Teachers have become so beholden to the idea that they should promote learner autonomy, he argues, that they do not consider whether doing so interferes with truly meeting the language learning needs of students. And it is those language learning needs that should take priority in instruction.

I enjoyed Shaw's article for a number of reasons. First, his emphasis on the importance of meeting learner needs matches a point I try to make to my students all the time. My teacher education students often focus on

the distinction between lesson plans that are *student-centered* or *teacher-centered*, with the former being good and the latter, bad. But I try to make a case to them that it is more important that any lesson they give be learning-centered, directed towards helping learners acquire the language they need. As Shaw suggests, sometimes this may require teachers to be directive rather than turning the lesson into a discovery process for students.

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Next, his point that we are sometimes trapped by our ideas about what we should be teaching rang home with me in terms of the research methods class I've been teaching over the last three cycles. It has never worked the way that I had intended. And now, I am forced to concede that the focus on action research projects may not have been the right one for what my students need and that a more traditional approach to methods may have been better at providing understanding of research in the field.

But most importantly, I appreciate Shaw's point about the value of collaboration with colleagues as a way of developing the insight we need to be able to make decisions about how we want to teach our students: "Dialogue therefore is needed, with teachers as critical peers, willing to question each other's assumptions and explore new avenues for questioning..." (p. 200). It is when we work together that we have the best chance of becoming autonomous.

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### The Author



**Bill Snyder** teaches in the Hanyang-Oregon Joint TESOL certificate program at Hanyang University. Dr. Snyder's research interests include learner and teacher motivation and non-native speaker teacher issues in TESOL. He is also KOTESOL's Publications Committee Chair. Email: [w Snyder7@gmail.com](mailto:w Snyder7@gmail.com)

## Breaking Out of the Egg Carton

Teaching is often portrayed as an isolating profession, with the school as an “egg carton” in which each teacher works in their own classroom (Lortie, 1975). There is some truth to this. I worked for a couple of years in a program for recent immigrants in Chicago, and I remember noticing when people there moved on to other jobs how little I knew some of my colleagues despite working with them four nights a week. We saw each other every day before class as we finished our preparations. But then the bell would ring, and we would disappear into our compartments in the “carton”, teach, and then wave good-bye as we left at the end of the night. I learned a lot about teaching from that experience, but not as much as I might have if my colleagues and I had interacted more.

Professional development should be about breaking down the walls that separate teachers from each other and creating opportunities to share. As Julian Edge has pointed out, “Self-development needs other people: colleagues and students. By cooperating with others, we can come to understand better our own experiences and opinions” (cited in Bailey, Curtis, & Nunan, 2001, p. 240). Professional development activities often fail when they are seen as intrusive or evaluative. Activities that bring teachers together voluntarily to collaborate may be a more effective way to start professional development.

Bailey et al. (2001) suggest that while some professional development activities, like peer observation, are collaborative by nature, any professional development activity can be made collaborative. In the rest of this column, I would like to look at one professional development activity that is ordinarily solitary, teaching journals, and show what I gained from making it collaborative.

A teaching journal is a diary of how one experiences what one is teaching. Like any diary, it can be a private document, used just as a basis for personal reflection or self-observation. This can be a valuable form of reflection, but there is the possibility that the project will be abandoned. One way to ensure that the journal is not abandoned is to share it with someone else on a regular basis.

My colleagues and I are teaching a course for professors at my university on how to teach their classes in English effectively. This past term, after the first week of the course, I suggested to my colleague that we each keep a journal of what happened in each of the sections we taught and use that as a basis for

exploring the success of what we had designed and for talking about how we could continue to improve the course. We agreed to write the journals as soon as possible after each class and exchange them immediately, so that we could keep up with what each other was doing, compare notes on our classes, and help each other make plans for coming classes.

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I have never successfully kept a diary, and I imagine that without the obligation to share with my colleague, I would not have maintained this one. Knowing that I had an obligation to someone else is what made me write each day after class. Knowing I would make a record of the class made me more attentive in class. When things happened, I took note of them more carefully, to remember them better later. The next time we met, my colleague would mention what had stood out to her, and we could talk about what we felt was going on and what its implication might be. These exchanges pushed both of us to search for more materials, to revise coming lessons, and work harder at being better teachers.

All over Korea, teachers teach the same or similar classes next to each other all the time. Sharing teaching journals on a regular basis can be a path to professional development because the process of writing them promotes attention in class and reflection after it. Sharing them provides a basis for discussing what we do and refining our understanding of it. I know that I will continue to use this method in the future, and hope that some of you will find it interesting enough to try out.

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### The Author



**Bill Snyder** teaches in the joint Hanyang-Oregon TESOL certificate program at Hanyang University. Dr. Snyder's research interests include learner and teacher motivation and non-native speaker teacher issues in TESOL. He is also the KOTESOL's Publications Committee Chair. Email: [wsnyder7@gmail.com](mailto:wsnyder7@gmail.com)



## Reflection, Randomness, and Research

My students want to know why, as teachers, they should do research. I always reply that they need to do it because classrooms are messy places. Teachers and students enter in different combinations, different moods, and different directions every day. Odd things happen and well-made lesson plans are diverted into things unexpected. The classroom is not always an easy place for teachers to deal with situations. I promote reflective teaching practices, “the process of critical examination of experiences, a process that can lead to a better understanding of one’s teaching practices and routines” (Richards & Farrell, 2005, p. 7) in my classes because I believe such reflection can help teachers see their work more clearly. However, reflection is also limited by our own biases in seeing the world. Reflection extended over time and sharpened in focus into research helps overcome the problems of messiness and our own tendencies to see things as they may not be.

I recently finished reading *Fooled by Randomness* (Taleb, 2004), a book on economics, which at first glance would seem to have nothing to do with teaching. But Taleb’s argument about how people can be fooled by their own thought processes into drawing incorrect conclusions from things which are random, like fluctuations of the stock market, does apply to teaching languages. He makes the case that the same problems will arise in other fields that are prone to randomness. In addition, I would argue that language teaching is prone to randomness in both the short term and the long term.

In the short term, at the level of the lesson, we simply cannot say who will learn what from anything we teach. The transfer model of “we teach it, they learn-it” does not hold. In a reading lesson, some students will get your point about using strategies, others may notice new vocabulary or grammar, and (hopefully) just a few will spend time daydreaming. On any given day, we cannot know which students will be doing which.

In the long term, looking at students at the beginning, or even in the middle of the process of learning a language, we cannot say which ones will ultimately be successful, high-level learners. Too many variables intervene to make such predictions with accuracy. We teachers face a situation where we cannot clearly know the outcomes of our work.

To this messy situation, we bring the processes of reflection in order to create some sense for us and to help us do the job better. Yet, we are often fooled by our biases for “the visible, the embedded, the personal, the narrated, and the tangible” over “the abstract” (Taleb, 2004, p. 262). In particular, we tend to see

causal relations where none really exist. For example, we may try out a new activity in class or a new grouping arrangement for students and, in a reflective mode, notice that there are fewer management problems and more students seem to be paying attention. Nevertheless, we cannot assume that these two things are related. The management problems of other days may have had nothing to do with the activities or grouping arrangements used on them. Perhaps the weather outside was nice or the student who is the root of management trouble was absent that day.

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This message of not jumping to conclusions seems obvious, but Taleb argues that we are naturally inclined to it, for good reasons. Thus, we must be wary of it, wary of our tendency to believe that we have found the solution to our teaching problems. I do not think the message should be one of rejecting reflection because of our natural tendencies to misinterpret. Rather, we need to understand reflection in the long term, as a process of gathering information, evaluating, understanding, and always being open to new information and new understandings as we reflect more.

This extended process of reflection is what we can call research, especially as it becomes more focused. This research built out of reflection is the basis for teachers improving both their knowledge and their practice of the field (van Lier, 1996) and for dealing with the randomness of the language learning process.

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### The Author



Bill Snyder teaches in the joint Hanyang-Oregon TESOL certificate program at Hanyang University. Dr. Snyder’s research interests include learner and teacher motivation and non-native speaker teacher issues in TESOL. He is also the KOTESOL’s Publications Committee Chair. Email: wsnyder7@gmail.com

# Professional Development in Unexpected Places

In the beginning of his book on professional development with Kathleen Bailey and Andy Curtis (Bailey, Curtis, & Nunan, 2001), David Nunan relates a conversation he had with Bailey about how she learns as a teacher. She spoke with him about finding opportunities to learn in teaching a new course, to a type of students she had never had before, on a topic she knew little about. When I first read that passage a couple of years back, I thought, "Tough situation. I don't know how much I would get out of something like that."

Now I know better. The university I work at, like so many others in Korea, is striving to become more international. Part of that process is offering classes in English so that Korean students can be better prepared for work and so that students from other countries may be more attracted to the university. My colleagues and I were asked to design some courses to help the professors in other departments prepare to teach their courses in English.

We were not exactly thrilled about the idea of teaching courses on subject matter that was not really ours, to students (the professors) whose needs we did not really know, especially given very short notice to prepare material and plan lessons. We decided to focus on building confidence by providing lots of microteaching opportunities and helping the professors work on ways to engage their students more effectively before, during, and after classroom hours. We compiled a course book and got ready for the first class. I did not expect to be learning much as I taught this material.

One way in which we learn about our practice is through using self-monitoring as a basis for reflection. "Reflection is viewed as the process of critical evaluation of experiences, a process that can lead to a better understanding of one's teaching practices and routines" (Richards & Farrell, 2005, p. 7). Thinking about your teaching can get to be a habit, and I found myself doing it, even in this class that I did not want. Moreover, I have been pleasantly surprised at how useful the process has been for me, especially for figuring out how to better teach the language teacher education classes that are my bread-and-butter.

When my physics, chemistry, media law, medicine, and engineering professors talk about the issues they confront in teaching their students, I find myself making connections to my own classes. When they show the strategies and solutions that they have developed, I find myself wondering whether these ideas can have relevance to my situation, and more often than not, find myself saying "yes." I think I am helping them with their problems, but I know that they are helping me think about mine.

Sometimes, the revelations can be quite sudden. One of the chemists once spoke about his students not being able to present effectively in class because of the difficulty of the material. As I tried to suggest ways around this problem, I thought of how I used to deal with such a problem in a testing class in Turkey. I also realized at the same time that I could organize my Applied Phonetics and Phonology class here in the same way and doing so would likely improve the quality of student presentations in it. I have already begun the revision of my syllabus for next term to make this adjustment.

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I have also been challenged and changed in my thinking about using technology in the classroom by seeing how the professors make use of different programs to organize and enliven their material, provide support for their students (who, like mine, are non-native speakers), as well as support and strengthen their own presentation skills. I do not think I am going to plunge into using PowerPoint for every class, but I know that I am going to explore more of how I can use it, in addition to the web-based storage that the university makes available, to help my students learn more effectively and independently.

Sometimes we have to teach things we do not want to. However, when we see those classes, too, as opportunities for reflection, we may be surprised at what we can learn. I can feel now that these classes have turned out to be an advantage to me, helping me improve in myself as a teacher. Lesson learned.

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### The Author



Bill Snyder teaches in the joint Hanyang-Oregon TESOL certificate program at Hanyang University. Dr. Snyder's research interests include learner and teacher motivation and non-native speaker teacher issues in TESOL. He is also KOTESOL's Publications Committee Chair and Journal editor. Email: [usnyder7@gmail.com](mailto:usnyder7@gmail.com)

## From “Noticing to Learn” to “Noticing Learning”

When I was a classroom teacher, I had a never-fail speaking task that I would use with my low-intermediate students, an adaptation of an activity from one of Christopher Sion’s books called “When Was the Last Time?” Whenever I used it, students would happily and noisily chatter away until the end of class, ignoring me. I would stand in their midst, listening in for tidbits that I could use in later lessons - grammar points to go over or useful phrases they might need. Before I would let them go from the class, I would always ask them to think about the fact that they had spent the last 30 minutes or so just talking in English and what this meant about their abilities in English.

Now, when I teach my course in Second Language Acquisition, I spend some time talking about Richard Schmidt’s (1990) Noticing Hypothesis, which argues for the importance of awareness and attention in language learning. The hypothesis claims that it is what learners notice in input that has the potential for intake as knowledge. I use this idea to make the argument that a primary job of the teacher is to present learners with tasks that help them notice things in the language in order to learn it.

While Schmidt is talking just about noticing in order to build linguistic knowledge, I think that the idea of the importance of noticing for learning has wider implications. The activity I mention above was intended to help students build fluency in using past-tense forms, and it may be that the repetitive use of those forms in the activity did help some students notice them and make their use more automatic. But asking students to reflect on the fact that they had just talked for a half hour in English was because I wanted them to notice not something about English, but about themselves and what they could do in English. I wanted them to be conscious of being able to speak in English rather than walking out of class without being aware it.

Some research a colleague and I did a few years ago (Tardy & Snyder, 2004) looked at when teachers felt best about their work. One of the results was that this optimal feeling occurred when teachers noticed their students learning. One of the teachers we interviewed talked about her positive feeling in teaching a grammar activity in which she felt she could see how her students “realized the rules for the first time” (p. 123). We argued in the article that part of teacher education and professional development should be helping teachers notice these moments and through them develop what Prabhu (1990) has called a “sense of plausibility” about what works in the classroom. This sense of plausibility is the teacher’s own

understanding, then, about how teaching relates to learning (and vice-versa).

In short, for teachers’ professional development, we need our own version of the Noticing Hypothesis. Our input is our daily practice, but the intake that changes and advances our knowledge of that practice depends on what we notice in it. I think we especially need to notice and pay attention to when we think learning is taking place because promoting learning is our ultimate goal. This kind of noticing will help us make more informed decisions in the future, with the aim of promoting learning even more effectively.

### Professional Development

By Bill Snyder

Returning to students, perhaps we should consider promoting a similar sense of plausibility in them. Getting them to notice not only in order to learn, but also to notice their own learning would help them cultivate the strategies that can help them become more effective and autonomous learners. And a simple way to do this is to ask them to think about what they have learned each day and how they did it. The learning may be a grammar rule or some vocabulary, but can include the recognition of what they are capable of in using the language, which is what I was aiming for at the end of my never-fail speaking activity. If we both develop our senses of how teaching and learning go together, we can make the classroom work for all of us.

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#### The Author



**Bill Snyder** teaches in the joint Hanyang-Oregon TESOL certificate program at Hanyang University. Dr. Snyder’s research interests include learner and teacher motivation and non-native speaker teacher issues in TESOL. He is also the current KOTESOL’s Publications Committee Chair. Email: wsnyder7@gmail.com

# The Mindset of Professional Development

I work in a teacher education program in which over 90% of my students are Korean. They come to the program with different backgrounds: Some are already teachers, either in the public schools or private institutes (i.e., *hagwons*); some are just starting out in teaching. What they share is a desire to be better teachers after going through the program. Indeed, to even enter the program, they must have believed that taking it would help them improve as teachers.

This belief is an example of what psychologist Carol Dweck (2006) calls *the growth mindset*. People with a growth mindset believe that their talents are not fixed, but can be developed through effort. These people thrive on challenge and see difficulties not as destructive, but as opportunities to learn more. In a sense, this is the mindset of professional development. I assume that you wouldn't be reading this column if you didn't see an opportunity to learn from it.

Dweck contrasts this with what she calls *the fixed mindset*, which believes that abilities are pre-determined and unchangeable. People with this mindset tend to give up easily when they first encounter difficulties because they see them as a sign that they don't have the ability to succeed. Often, they won't even try new experiences for fear of not succeeding or being the best on the first attempt.

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## The fixed mind-set vs. the growth mind-set.

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People with both mindsets can be successful in their endeavors (Dweck contrasts Michael Jordan's growth mindset with John McEnroe's fixed mindset), but they attribute their success to different things. And it seems like people with the growth mindset enjoy their success more, mostly because they are focused on the challenge and not the outcome. For fixed mindset people, success must be eternally reproduced because any failure is a sign of their personal lacks.

I say that my students are growth-oriented, but I really need to qualify this. When they come to my class on teaching pronunciation, many of them switch to a fixed mindset. They reject the idea that they could ever teach speaking; that is the purview of native-speaker teachers, who are born with the ability to do it. Not all my students believe this, but just having some students who do makes this class a special challenge to teach. I need not only to provide them with the fundamentals of teaching pronunciation, but also to change their mindset regarding their ability to use this knowledge.

I work on helping them see, first, that the knowledge imparted in the class makes it possible for them to design pronunciation lessons that they can manage effectively. I also talk with them about appropriate goals for pronunciation instruction. I want them to see that comprehensibility is the goal, not nativeness, and that they can help students improve in this direction. With some of my students, it is also important to talk about how improvement is gradual and that they should not expect learners to master what they teach on the first try.

Teaching this class has also been an experience of applying a growth mindset for me. I felt like I didn't know enough about teaching pronunciation when I was assigned to teach the course. I have spent two terms now preparing and learning and getting better with each class. What I have done is okay, but I always think I could improve the class by learning more about pronunciation and about how I could teach the material better.

For our professional development to continue, each of us needs to maintain a growth mindset where we have one already in our practice. We also need to rethink our fixed mindset and see potential for growth when asked to do things we don't believe we can in our practice. Furthermore, we need to make our teaching help our students move towards growth mindsets. Being less judgmental about their performances, creating environments that help them see a connection between effort and progress in learning, and the challenge for growth in tasks that are unfamiliar and difficult will do much to produce long-term positive outcomes in language learning in Korea. I see this in my own professional development and in that of my students, and hope that it is true for you as well.

## Professional Development

By Bill Snyder

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### The Author



Bill Snyder teaches in the joint Hanyang-Oregon TESOL certificate program at Hanyang University. Dr. Snyder's research interests include learner and teacher motivation and non-native speaker teacher issues in TESOL. Email: [wsnyder7@gmail.com](mailto:wsnyder7@gmail.com)



# Teacher Autonomy and the Morality of Teaching

Teacher autonomy refers to the freedom of teachers to make decisions regarding the implementation of the curriculum (Little, cited in Benson, 2001). It is through these decisions, J. D. Brown (1995) argues, that teachers modify the curriculum to best meet the unique needs of their learners in each classroom and promote learning. David Little has further claimed that these teacher decisions shape the potential development of learner autonomy in each student. In short, teacher autonomy is a precondition for learner autonomy.

Bill Johnston (2003) argues that many teaching decisions are inherently moral, that is, derived from the teacher's evaluative beliefs about what is good or bad, right or wrong. He points to a number of areas in which teachers make evaluative decisions in relation to students, including the teaching of pronunciation, the establishment of classroom rules, the assessment of students and assignment of grades, and the expression of self in classroom interaction by teachers. He also notes that there is very little discussion in the ELT literature of the moral aspect of teaching, which is problematic because of its pervasiveness and complexity. One of the purposes of professional development should be to raise the morality of teaching to consciousness and help teachers explore the ways in which their values influence their practices. It is only in this way that teachers can examine, alter, and justify those beliefs.

Barring a situation where a teacher has to read from a script and follow instructions exactly, all teachers are autonomous to some degree and most make all kinds of decisions about implementing the curriculum. Some of these may seem mundane, such as deciding on the order for doing two activities or deciding whether a task should be done individually or in groups, but in each case, the decision is made because the teacher believes that doing things that way will be best for the learners. Other decisions may be more weighty, like whether or not to have a pop quiz or how much value a certain assignment should receive in evaluating students. Again, the choice is a matter of what we feel is right.

Still other decisions bring us into the realm of moral dilemmas, where two relative goods may conflict with one another. For example, should we pass the borderline student or not? Passing the student may reflect the effort we feel that student put in and support continued motivation, but it may also move the student to a level that they aren't fully prepared for and create a problem for another teacher. Failing the student may

discourage them and prevent them from achieving their full potential. There is not a clear right answer and yet, we must make a choice. As Johnston notes, research may inform us about what to do, but not completely. And in the end, the decision may be more informed by our relationship with the student and what our understanding of the context tells us.

Teachers are urged these days to reflect on their practice as part of their professional development. Johnston's work suggests another, potentially important area

## Professional Development

By Bill Snyder

for reflection. We should examine the decisions we make in teaching to find the values that underlie them. This may be especially important when the decisions have high stakes for our students and when we feel conflicted in the process. The decisions also need to be explored in relation to the context of our work to see what role that has played in shaping our decisions. Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, we need to look at our decisions in terms of how we relate to our students as teachers and as people because the conflict between role (teacher) and self may be the most significant of all.

The exploration of the moral basis of our decisions will help us better understand ourselves as teachers. It should also help us make the best use of our autonomy to help our students learn. And in the process, it may also provide the basis for thinking about how we might create greater opportunities for autonomy for our students.

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### The Author



Bill Snyder teaches in the joint Hanyang-Oregon TESOL certificate program at Hanyang University. Dr. Snyder's research interests include learner and teacher motivation, and non-native speaker teacher issues in TESOL. Email: wsnyder7@gmail.com

# Teacher Expertise

By Glenn Hadikin

What makes an expert teacher? What does *expertise* even mean? Do experts in different fields share certain traits? I don't claim to have definite answers to these questions, but I feel that asking them can be a useful task, not least because it lets us explicitly lay out what we believe makes a great teacher and perhaps begin to see how well we measure up. For the last forty years, researchers have looked at expertise in various fields, from chess players to dancers, from military experts to nuclear power plant experts. A number of theories have been proposed, from expertise as a stage that can be reached and maintained to ideas that expertise is a process that needs to be continually evaluated.

Dreyfus and Dreyfus (1986) point out that human beings have an advantage over artificial intelligence. After attaining a certain amount of experience, we have an uncanny knack at zeroing in on the most promising set of options without having to consciously think about every possible one. Computers can't work on instincts. The study proposes a five stage model of the acquisition of skills from novice to expert, which I have summarized here (based on a summary by Tsui, 2003):

## What makes an expert teacher?

**Novice:** Novices are guided by explicitly stated rules with little thought for the current conditions.

**Advanced Beginner:** Advanced beginners have more experience than the novice and can recognize situational elements that need to be taken into account. An advanced beginner driver, for example, will begin to use the sound of the engine as well as simply changing gears at a given speed.

**Competent:** This stage is marked by goal-directed planning and an emotional investment into the outcomes. The competent actor uses a blend of context-free rules and situational elements to test out what can be achieved and make conscious decisions about what will work.

**Proficient:** At the proficient stage, actors begin to use intuition. Simple tasks can be completed with little thought and our higher brain functions can focus on greater challenges.

**Expert:** The expert stage is marked by effortless performance that requires little conscious reasoning. Only new or critical situations require deliberate thought before action is taken.

It should be noted that Dreyfus and Dreyfus' model is based on various fields, and we should ask ourselves what differences there may be between an expert

teacher and an expert driver. Can one really teach a class with effortless performance, and should we be striving for the ability to do so without thinking about our actions? Bereiter and Scardamalia (1993) propose that expertise is more of a process than a stage. They argue that writers often become fluent bad writers no matter how much experience they have. Drivers can begin to automate their operation of the car without actually being particularly good drivers. It can be more meaningful to consider differences between experts and experienced non-experts than comparing experts to novices. Bereiter and Scardamalia found that it was the way experts chose to see a task that distinguished them from non-experts. Experts see a task as a positive challenge. They want to work at the edge of their competence and push their abilities whereas non-experts just try to get things over with.

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Sometimes I feel that as teachers we can fall into the trap of thinking X amount of years experience equals expertise. Collecting degrees and diplomas and having colleagues ask for advice is comforting, but are we really working at the edge of our abilities this week? It is interesting to look at Dreyfus and Dreyfus' model and see how far we have come, but let's not get complacent. We need to keep looking at our classes as positive challenges and think how we can make them better. What that means in practice depends on you and your class.

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## The Author



**Glenn Hadikin** is a Professor of English at Daegu Catholic University. He is originally from St. Helens in Merseyside, England, and has been in Korea for the last six years. He is doing his MA TESOL at the University of London's Institute of Education. Email:

GHadikin@hotmail.com



# Understanding Korean Learners

By Kevin Landry

Teaching in Korea can be a dream come true. Considering how motivated our students are, we are comparatively lucky by international standards. Our students strive for high grades and scores. In general, they are well behaved. In traditional Confucian teachings, students are instructed to obey their teachers. There is even the common Korean saying "Respect your teacher as you do your father."

But with all these positive aspects, your teaching experience may still not be so rosy. "Classroom culture shock," or at least "cultural misunderstanding," may be a problem. To avoid this, it would help to learn more about your students and the Korean classroom context. Getting to know your students - their lives, their culture, and their language - can be a source of professional development and personal satisfaction.

Growing up in an English-speaking country may not prepare one for teaching in a Korean context. Yes, students are still disciplined, sometimes through corporal punishment, and privacy rights are often overlooked. However, if you can see your students and co-workers as part of an extended family, teaching in the Korean context begins to make sense.

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## Getting to know your students can be a source of professional development

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In Korea, people address each other by their relationship rather than by name. Are you familiar with the concepts of "older brother" or "younger sister?" Naming terms even change by gender. For example, males wanting the attention of an older female use one term of address; females addressing an older female use another. As you might expect, certain behavior patterns grow from this; e.g., older peers have a responsibility to shepherd younger people who show them respect. Considering peer relationships can offer some insight into why certain things are done as they are in Korea, including their impact on CLT classroom procedure.

What I really like doing in my classes is expanding basic coursebook lessons. One way to exploit the text is to find out what interests your students. To give an example, while teaching middle school learners at a winter camp, we were following a textbook that was very grammar-centric and contained many dry, fill-in-the-blank exercises. Rather than only do what was prescribed in the teacher's guide, I tried many different activities related to what we were studying that proved

more interesting to my students.

When we began a unit focusing on *did*, I had them write their own questions on a piece of blank scrap paper. They worked with a partner and came up with their own questions to ask their classmates. Once they made three or four questions, I split them up and had them move around the class asking their questions to others. The moving around got them out of their routine and into the lesson.

To expand on the simple *yes/no* question material in the coursebook, I incorporated follow-up questions for them, and developed menu-making group-work activities and restaurant-ordering role plays. These extensions give a greater sense of authenticity to the textbook materials.

The final idea I used was taking a comic strip from the back of the book and having the students make their own stories with a partner. I encouraged them to use characters they knew, with each team completing one of the three panels. Finally, the finished product was displayed on the classroom wall. These activities were designed with students' interests in mind.

I have been really interested in language learners expressing themselves through art, and I always encourage speech bubbles and narration boxes. Some of the students are great artists and others come up with good ideas. Seeing them navigating the classroom, reading each other's work, is gratifying. They always enjoy what others have to say, and time seems to fly. You can find some examples that I have scanned and posted online at <http://www.edactive.com/comicsforeducation/index.htm>

Getting to know my students interests and abilities has helped me prepare better, more successful lessons, and has contributed to my personal development

### The Author



**Kevin Landry** lectures at Hongik University. He holds an MA in Linguistics (TESOL) from the University of Surrey and a TES/FL Certificate from Saint Mary's University. His current KOTESOL positions include Teacher Education and Development Special Interest Group Facilitator and National Nominations and Elections Committee Chair.



# Teacher Maxims

By Glenn Hadikin

The twentieth century scientist-turned-philosopher Polanyi once said, "We know more than we can tell. Sometimes our actions are guided by values and attitudes without us even knowing, and this is particularly true for EAL (English as an Additional Language) teachers. I share Gebhard and Oprandy's (1999) stance that we should not be too judgemental of ourselves in terms of what we consider good or bad teaching; we should just try to see our teaching for what it actually is.

Jack Richards (1996) proposed "teacher maxims" as a useful tool that allows us to stop and think about what intrinsic values guide us in the classroom. Richards suggested teacher maxims as a practical way of thinking about one's teacher knowledge. He points out recent references to teachers' images, thoughts, and beliefs, and how they can provide an explicit summary of what guides us, often implicitly, as teachers. Images and metaphors such as "the teacher as a friend" or "the teacher as a policeman," or the belief that one must always supplement textbooks are just a few examples of ideas that can guide us without us even knowing it. Richards considers maxims to be "images that have been transformed into models for practical action" and offers teachers these two maxims as examples:

- **The Maxim of Involvement:** Follow the learners' interests to maintain students involvement.
- **The Maxim of Planning:** Plan your teaching and try to follow your plan.

I nominated myself as a guinea pig to test out some of his ideas by selecting five of my own maxims to explore:

- **The Maxim of Relaxation:** Keep everyone comfortable and relaxed in class.
- **The Maxim of Professionalism:** Be professional at all times.
- **The Maxim of Exploration:** Encourage students to take more responsibility for their learning and explore some of their own ideas.
- **The Maxim of Conversation:** Keep students conversing in English at all times.
- **The Maxim of Togetherness:** Try to keep the class feeling like a team of equals; avoid lecturing.

The very act of choosing five rules that guide your teaching can be quite an eye-opener. Colleagues of mine agreed when they explored their own maxims. It can also be revealing to consider where these ideas may have come from. What experiences in your past, both as teacher and learner, are likely to have contributed? How can these maxims be beneficial to students? Can they be detrimental to learning, and does your teaching

- in practice - actually reflect them?

If I consider my own maxims, for example, I could argue that the first one helps motivate students and perhaps came from my own experiences trying to learn French and Korean. My Maxim of Professionalism was likely influenced by teacher training college in the UK, and my Maxim of Exploration was probably influenced by discussions I have been involved in during my current MA TESOL course. My Maxim of Conversation, however, was partially influenced by Grammar-Translation-style teaching at my first language school and could usefully be reconsidered in the light of new research. Your maxims can also serve as a useful basis for classroom observation by colleagues - do you actually follow your own maxims from another teacher's perspective?

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### *Our actions are guided by values and attitudes.*

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I invite all of you to note down five of your own teacher maxims and ask yourselves similar questions. Of course, our maxims should not go unchallenged, and we need to remember that they are far from objective. At best, even a perfect picture of what guides us as teachers is a relatively small factor in the complex matrix of personal interactions that we call a class. Teacher maxims are just the beginning.

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### The Author



**Glenn Hadikin** is a Professor of English at Daegu Catholic University, South Korea. He is originally from St. Helens in Merseyside, England, and has been in Korea for the last six years. He is doing his MA TESOL at the University of London's Institute of Education. Email: [GHadikin@hotmail.com](mailto:GHadikin@hotmail.com)



# Specialization

Like most in professions, in teaching, the basic qualification prepares teachers to handle the most general of issues. While there is of course no shame in being a generalist, one who can handle a wide variety of courses to some extent, it is generally expected that as teachers become more senior they will develop advanced skills in one or a few topic areas, to serve as a resource to colleagues and to handle certain courses on a regular basis.

Though most MATESOL programs offer advanced courses in specific fields, few teachers would claim to be specialists based solely on a master's degree. Yet doctoral studies are not the way ahead for most teachers.

Specialization is a frequent focus of professional development. As Richards and Farrell (2005) observe, staff development programs in schools are often a balance between school needs and teacher aims, and the loss of a senior teacher specializing in a particular area (e.g., listening or CALL) generally creates an opportunity for another teacher to grow into that vacancy. Other teachers grow into their specialization

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*Few teachers would claim to be specialists based solely on a master's degree.*

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through their own interests, whereas still others seem to fall into a specialty without much thought on the matter.

Specialization in English language teaching (ELT) is different than in many other teaching contexts in that English as a foreign/second language has already been clearly subdivided to a much greater extent than, say, mathematics or science. We have the four basic "skills": Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing; a number of "language sciences," and the history of the English language; Literature, and Technology-Enhanced Language Learning. And we've got still more skills and types, including Business English, Vocation-Specific English, Public Speaking, and Interpretation and Translation.

## **Paths Towards Specialization**

As with most forms of professional development, the route to specialization can take many forms, and very often a combination of these: formal studies, workshops, professional and academic reading, discussions with colleagues, and experimentation

(sometimes also known as "sink or swim"). The major ELT publishers all have book series for teacher education and training on speciality areas, and these can range from collections of simple techniques and photocopyables to light subject area introductions to massive scholarly tomes. Most of the larger English teaching conferences design "tracks" for their

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conference presentations where attendees can quickly ascertain which sessions fit which specializations. Too often overlooked, however, are the various Internet chatboards and email discussion lists, along with IATEFL and TESOL SIGs, that focus on teaching specialties. Action research, or even reflection, too, can be important aspects in developing specialization.

## **Avoiding "Getting into a Rut"**

Unlike some professions, teaching does not require that a specialist abandon other fields. Many teachers purposefully maintain one or more courses outside their specialization. Some institutions require teachers to teach a certain number of "general" courses, either to share the load, or to stay aware of issues outside their special field. While this is an obvious way to diversify, there are teachers in general assignments that find themselves doing the same things in the same ways. The Korean "eum and yang" symbol provides a helpful reminder, there should be balance. Even while developing expertise in a specialty area, one should also explore new fields. These explorations might be new teaching areas, or simply new ways of doing things within your specialty. I will also encourage teaching in other venues (lawfully, of course!), such as summer camps, weekend intensive programs, and teacher English training projects, perhaps even in other countries.

Many of us teaching English in Korea were originally educated in some field other than English teaching, and furthermore, each of us is unique. Specialization should include bringing the best of our individual natures to our teaching and sharing our own perspectives with our colleagues.

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# Finding Your Whole Self

Korea's current "well-being" craze hasn't yet found the English classroom.

In contrast to the previous five columns, where we have been examining issues in areas traditionally aligned with education and instruction (however tenuously), this time we consider elements that are clearly outside the box. And unlike previous columns, there is little effort to ground the arguments here through the received wisdom of academia. It's obvious: your health is fundamental to your ability to teach.

Alan Maley (2000) discussed the need to manage and maintain a teacher's voice. Sounding more like one's grandmother than a teacher trainer, he reminds us to rest the voice when we can, not strain it, avoid dust and the sniffles, and so forth. Actually, in design and contents, this little book reminds one of a musician's practice book: it is filled with short exercises one can do to protect, strengthen, extend, and maintain the voice - that so useful tool in a classroom. Still, one could argue that the voice is a rather obvious concern for teachers. Why did it take an established maverick like Maley to make it marketable in ELT?

Obviously the same arguments can be made for most aspects of the human anatomy – comfortable shoes protect the long-standing teacher, caution for temperature and chalk dust, avoidance of overwork,

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## Job-stress is pervasive.

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and so forth. Unfortunately, school administrators often don't see eye-to-eye on how much is too much. Issues of teachers' emotional health are discussed far less often, if indeed at all. Yet as a developing professional, we have a duty to maintain and improve our ability to teach, and to help others to do the same. So why is it that among educated professions such as teaching, nursing, and law, the burnout rate is so high? Why are nearly 50% of new graduates leaving their chosen profession within the first five years of entry?

The methods craze of the 1970s and 1980s brought "psycho-social" concerns to the forefront of language teaching, yet the focus was on the learner. Relaxation, comfort, sense of acceptance, supportive (non-critical) guidance from class facilitators, even improved furniture and surroundings failed to address the teacher's own situation, and the post-90s demand for documented learning growth, even assessing teaching based on learner's test scores, has turned up the heat for teachers in North America and here in Korea. Korean students are literally killing themselves in university entrance competitions; it's simply a matter of time before we hear of Korean secondary school

teachers doing likewise.

Fifteen years ago, a teacher in Korea had a life of great prestige, even if the salary wasn't much. Students dared not "step on the shadow" of the teacher. Parents bowed in respect. University professors taught ten hours per week in the provinces, researched little, published little, and after a few years, could teach through recycled lessons, hence they needed little preparation for many classes. There was time for contemplation and rejuvenation: in terms of work-related stress, life was good. Most of those professors have now retired, or have seen their work-environment change dramatically. They are teaching more, required to research and publish more, and dealing with less-respectful students who were less successful in high school than their predecessors.

Expectations are climbing. Teachers at secondary and tertiary levels are concerned about the employability of their students, which can affect both bonuses and even the continuing vitality of their schools. Employers demand more work-related skills of graduates. Parents are demanding more of teachers too, and at many colleges and universities, student recruitment obligations can devour dozens of hours per month. There seems no escape from ever-climbing responsibilities, and rarely a chance to relax. Job and university entrance competition seeps all the way to kindergartens, as well as the private academies, and teachers are held accountable for their students' success. Job-stress is pervasive. Although pay is now competitive with the business community and there are many unemployed PhD holders, tenured professors and highly experienced teachers are walking away from their classrooms in search of a better life.

Even while vacations shorten and overtime extends, teachers must find their own seas of serenity during the school term, whether through hobbies, computer, novel, or movie escapes, yoga and transcendental mysticism, or whatever works for them. The "end-of-semester" vacation is too remote, classroom frustrations too immediate. A ten-minute break can be invaluable. That which was scorned twenty years ago is now high on the "recommended reading" lists of many teachers.

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## Professional Development

By Robert J. Dickey

## Explorations in the Classroom

We need to validate more opportunities for teachers to develop themselves through learning about teaching as they teach. After all, “learn by doing” is a well-accepted approach. There is no question about it, many teachers are simply too busy to set time aside for formal research projects. In the previous column (*Doing Research*), I observed that action research, too, can have a rather narrow definition. But learning from ourselves is not limited to action research. Modifying terminology from Allwright and Bailey (1991), I would like to offer the theme of “Classroom Explorations” for an area where teachers can learn from their own classrooms without the constrictions of the research paradigm. I include “reflective practice” under this concept. Let’s investigate some possibilities.

Thomas S.C. Farrell, a long-time KOTESOL member, recently authored *Reflective Practice in Action*, which recognizes the awareness of “that was a good class” as an initial step in professional development. The 80 “reflection breaks” in his book run from musings during a quick cup of coffee to intensive teaching journal entries that may be shared with “critical friends.” Unlike the traditional research paradigms, in reflective practice there is no need to publish findings through journals or conference presentations, all discoveries (both positive and less-flattering) can remain private. In reflection, the exploration of the classroom takes place within the mind of the teacher; there need not be “experimentation” in the classroom.

While peer evaluation has long been recognized as both a means for collegial development as well as

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### *Professional development is always personal.*

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professional assessment, many of the techniques offered there also can be used in personal classroom explorations. Video or audio recording can be used, as well as checklists that are marked either as part of a quiet reflection time immediately after the class or during a teacher’s pause in class. One of my own discoveries in watching a class recording was that I roamed across the front of the classroom excessively. As I used a video-cam in those classes frequently that semester, students seemed little influenced by cameras.

We can also consider little activities that might be called “mini-studies”: things a teacher might attempt during a single class period, perhaps based on sudden inspiration or a student comment. I call this “*What happens if...?*” For this next semester, I’m considering simply not talking for one day. What if the “language model” doesn’t model? This isn’t Gattegno’s “Silent

Way” - we aren’t introducing all the tools and precepts of that method - but instead challenging students’ belief that they need a live native-speaker model in the classroom. My discoveries might include:

- \* how the students react.
- \* how they accommodate, once they realize the teacher won’t speak.
- \* how they evaluate the lesson (in a subsequent class session).

Another exploration could be “*What if I handed a dictionary or grammar guide to each student*

*who asked a question of that nature?*” - would students learn to begin to look for answers in their own materials, or simply stop asking questions?

I have done the second exploration, as well as one of writing the question on the board, without answer, and observed how students reacted for the remainder of the hour. (Some students tried to find answers while they were supposed to be doing other things.) At the end of the class, I asked if students could help their classmates by answering any of the questions. In almost every case, the answers were available among classmates. Several years later, I am still trying to understand all the ramifications of that “discovery.”

It is important to consider that in classroom explorations, no literature review is necessary prior to beginning (though it won’t hurt!), and no formal hypothesis is expected. And, as with my questions on the chalkboard exploration, the answers might just create more questions!

While I could certainly offer more examples, both from professional and academic literature as well as the experiences of myself and others, the point of classroom explorations is to not set boundaries, to ask the questions that are interesting to you, and to find answers. Every teacher is different, and every classroom is different, so while we have much to share, we are also individuals. Professional development is always personal.

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*By Robert J. Dickey*

## Doing Research

Many teachers advocate "associations" and a broad and multi-faceted approach to development. However, it may be time for a reality check. The fact is that many others look at professional development with an eye towards promotions, pay-raises, and new job opportunities. And particularly in Korea, many employers are quite conservative in their perspectives on what constitutes evidence of growth as a teacher. These conservative individuals typically want to see evidence of research alongside certificates, degrees, and teaching experience.

Many of you likely thought that your research projects ended when you finished your last formal studies program. Don't gasp or fret at the thought of more research. It doesn't have to be that bad! There are lots of varieties of research. This column will discuss some of them, and issues around teachers doing research in general.

Classic research, often called "quantitative" study because of its heavy reliance on numeric data, isn't really part of most teachers' approach to research. Most of us aren't equipped with statistical analysis training and tools, and aren't interested in learning. While not ruling this type of research out, let's look a bit further.

"Qualitative research" suggests that, rather than looking at numbers, there are other factors that can be evaluated carefully and relatively accurately. Not necessarily an exact opposite of quantitative, it is enough to recognize that most classroom teachers who do research are more interested in studies that don't reduce all factors to "yes"/"no" or purely numeric calculations.

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***"many employers are quite conservative in their perspectives on what constitutes evidence of growth as a teacher."***

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Classroom-based research, case-studies, and action research are the areas that most teachers are more able and willing to consider. There are countless definitions for each of these. Let me summarize by observing that classroom-based research seems pretty self-descriptive, but note that the researcher may not be a teacher, or might be a teacher operating under the direction of an outsider. Case studies can be done by anyone. The case might be an individual, a few individuals, a class, all classes taught by an individual, all classes taught by a group of teachers, or any number of teachers attempting to jointly test a certain strategy. Action

research is designed by a teacher in reaction to an event or events occurring in that teacher's own classroom

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Action research comes in different varieties. Some of the best-known scholars in ELT can't agree on an ideal approach, so I'd like to direct those interested to a review essay comparing the designs from three of the better-known teacher-research books. It is published in the PAC Journal and available online (Dickey, 2001a).

In terms of satisfying those conservative employers, it's not enough to just do the research study; it has to be published. Publishing, and how to publish, is one of the areas of disagreement identified in the review essay. But as I have noted in another organization's newsletter a few years ago (Dickey, 2001b), for many people, if the "study" doesn't conform to some traditional concerns for "scholarly rigor" and publication, it may not be treated as "research." And thus, you won't get the credit you seek. However, publication need not be defined as "in a journal."

In Korea, most employers grant some level of recognition to conference presentations so long as an abstract appears in a program book. An "extended summary" of two to six pages receives additional credit. A "full-length paper" (2,000-9,000 words) appearing in a teachers' newsletter or bound conference proceedings is awarded still more credit, and publication in a book or journal more still. Note that for many Korean employers, an "Internet journal" (where there are no hardcopies published) may not be recognized as a bona-fide journal, though this thinking is beginning to change. This issue may affect your decision on where to submit a paper, as might the relative "ranking" awarded a journal. Simply posting your paper on your own website might serve some purposes as well.

Korea TESOL has its own journal (*Korea TESOL Journal*), which is actively encouraging more research papers about Korean learners, written by teachers in Korea. *KOTESOL Conference Proceedings* and this newsletter, *The English Connection*, also seek submissions.

Dr. Andrew Finch wrote a humorous, yet telling little dialog about doing action research in the January 2002 issue of this newsletter (Finch, 2002a), which points out how important and relatively painless action research can be. (Also see his Action Research article in this issue.) Furthermore, KOTESOL has a research committee, and research grants, which can support teachers in their investigations. You can take a look at other articles in previous issues (see Jung, 2002, and Finch, 2002b) and





browse further yourself.

More than anything else, if you want to "do research" in terms of meeting the standards for publication and in order to satisfy those traditional professional growth assessments, may I make some suggestions. Make a research plan (yes, even for dynamic action research), share it with some others who have publishing experience, and start a literature review of the relevant issue before starting the research. Even just three to four hours in the library can help you refine your experiment and give you confidence that what you intend to do will be attractive to some journal or conference committee.

There are also a myriad of articles on the Internet about publishing. Check our own KOTESOL publications page for a few pointers: <http://www.kotesol.org/pubs>.

Within KOTESOL, individuals willing to give advice on your research include:

Dr. Joo-Kyung Park, Research Committee Chair  
Dr. Dongil Shin, *Korea TESOL Journal* Editor-in-Chief  
And myself, Dr. Robert Dickey.

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Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, Inc.  
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## The 39th Annual TESOL Convention and Exhibit

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## "Certificated" Teachers?

In the previous column (More than Degrees, TEC 8[2]), I suggested that continuing professional development for language teachers should reach considerably beyond traditional academic studies. And while there is an emerging recognition of portfolios for professional assessment and employment, it cannot be denied that most employers still hold highest regard for various forms of professional and academic certification.

Unfortunately, in the field of ELT, particularly in EFL settings, there is little agreement or standardization on what constitutes a meaningful certificate. A few examples are fitting.

- Certificate of Attendance at a half-day workshop
- Certificate of Completion of a six-hour training program
- Continuing Education Units (CEUs) offered by an accredited post-graduate teacher education university
- TESOL Certificate
- TESOL Diploma
- MATESOL

Even within these types there are an endless number of subtypes and varieties.

In the past 25 years, two very similar models have come out of western Europe with a standard that is recognized throughout most of the ELT world, though these have only recently become accepted by many employers in Korea: The Cambridge/UCLES/RSA program's CELTA/DELTA and the Trinity Certificate/Diploma. It should be noted that these are EFL teacher training programs which do not certify teachers to work in state schools. Furthermore, these programs have evolved considerably over the past 20 years, no longer emphasizing old P-P-P designs. The

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***“Unfortunately...there is little agreement or standardization on what constitutes a meaningful certificate.”***

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certificates in these programs, along with numerous other programs with similar approaches, require 100-120 hours of training, a substantial portion of which includes a tutor-observed teaching practicum and the trainee's critical observation of others' practicum lessons. These generally involve little theory beyond awareness of the types of language and issues one might encounter if the novice teacher decides to begin reading more on the subject. The diploma-level programs involve more readings on theory and reflective analysis of one's own teaching. Such programs require current teaching and often stretch over six months or more. There are now different certificates for the teaching of adults and young learners, e.g., CELTA/CELTYL.

On the other hand, there are “TESOL certificates” and

“diplomas” that can be done entirely online or through other distance modes (hence, no tutor observation), there are quality

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certificates with orientations somewhat different from the RSA/Trinity concept, and there are diplomas that are based on one or two terms of work towards a master's degree(also no classroom observations).

David English House in Japan is one of many organizations in Japan offering a one-day/two-day certificate program for teaching children, requiring a report following the training day. These types of certificates hopefully mean more than the mere attendance receipts that are often handed out with no regard to whether or not the “attendees” were physically present in the training rooms, or whether they were sleeping during training. In either case, the value of these certificates is probably negligible, unless your employer requires you do get some number of training hours every so often. It should be recognized, however, that many of the CEUs courses required for licensure for teachers in state schools are not altogether different from those “certificates of registration.” The training offered at such programs can be top - notch - we must distinguish between the value of the training and the perceived value of the certification offered upon completion.

And what of the MATESOL (and similar) degrees? They too vary from the deeply theoretical preparations for PhD to highly “hands-on in the classroom” to “self-assessing spiritual guide” to... Some countries have attempted to set standards for various teacher preparation programs through nationally (or regionally) recognized teacher associations, others through legislation. These standards have not been very effective yet. Those schools with high levels of recognition don't need the endorsement of such standards, and some other institutions determine that they better meet their own program needs by avoiding those standards.

Ultimately, we find that we are hardly farther along than when we started - the certification of teachers is only as good as the name recognition of the certifier. As more and more employers in Korea require certification, they will, as individuals, learn to recognize which certifying programs are more likely to produce teachers fitting the standards of that employer. But at the university level, as long as the “directing professor” is rotated every two years, such awareness is unlikely soon. In the meantime, keep investigating your professional development options, and join the KOTESOL Teacher Education and Development SIG, [http://groups.yahoo.com/group/KOTESOL\\_TED\\_SIG/](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/KOTESOL_TED_SIG/), to share with others what you have learned, and to learn from others doing likewise.

## More than Degrees

Professional Development, or Continuing Professional Development (CPD) as it is sometimes called, can include many concepts in addition to educational degrees and certificates. While there are those who believe that a master's degree in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (MATESOL) or similar, or a doctorate in English Education or Applied Linguistics/Second Language Acquisition is the definitive qualification for teaching English, there are numerous other options available. Another perspective is that traditional research studies are fundamental to professional development, regardless of initial qualification. Classroom studies, practicum, training, readings, discussions, conferences, memberships, and more, also may be included in a list of professional development activities.

The British Institute of English Language Teaching (BIELT, [www.bielt.org](http://www.bielt.org)) attempted to formalize accreditation of a broad perspective to professional development. While the organization itself has become remarkably silent, their compilation of professional development activities is still a useful guide. We should recognize, however, that while this is an approach many teachers and teacher trainers would endorse, more traditional minds may see things differently - which is to say employers in Korea may not necessarily think you deserve a pay raise based on your involvement in the type of activities that follow!

Research has many definitions (see my commentary in the KATE Newsletter, June 2001), which may or may not require formal "publishing" in a journal or speaking before a conference. Some say Action Research may include such things as reflective practice or evaluating the performance of teachers (yourself or others). Teaching diaries, too, may be a form of research. The TESOL

Research Agenda (TESOL Inc., 2000) states that research "should embrace epistemological flexibility and inclusiveness." A review essay in the PAC Journal (Dickey, 2001) discusses the varying perspectives of three major research guidebooks by Anne Burns, Donald Freeman, and Michael Wallace: there is no unified opinion on this topic.

Workshops and conferences, both as attendee and as presenter, are often cited as forms of continuing professional development. When you participate in a conference session, you become aware of other approaches to problems you, too, face, and chats outside the workshops can be no less enlightening. In-house training programs, KOTESOL chapter meetings, and semi-organized staff-room discussions produce the same level of mental activity. The BIELT worksheets go so far as to argue that those who coordinate such programs should also get credit for professional development, not just for their dedication to their fellows (which, after all, ought to be worth something!) but because that process gets the mental juices flowing much like considering an upcoming meal can start the mouth watering.

Courses of study are an obvious form of CPD, but also, not so obvious. While "recognized" certificates and diplomas in ELT are increasingly available in Asia, more choices are out there. A one-day, six-hour workshop certificate may or may not be equivalent to 1/20th of a 120-hour course with practicum. Then too, courses in topics only peripherally related to ELT can be counted, such as computers or other technologies, literature, public speaking, or even personal wellness such as yoga (after all, one doesn't usually teach well when one is sick, physically or spiritually). The role of personal development within CPD is somewhat controversial, of course, and it shouldn't be the main focus of a

teacher's continuing professional development, but it can surely be one aspect of a total teacher development program. There is also the advantage of returning to the role of "learner" to give us a freshened perspective on what and how we teach. Distance studies add another issue to be considered - level of contact with other learners.

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By Robert J. Dickey

Visitations and "shadowing" are another aspect, where teachers see firsthand how others are addressing issues in language education. We needn't limit ourselves to the teaching of English: teachers of other languages, and indeed, teachers of other topic areas, face many of the same issues, and may have developed responses far outside current ELT thinking. Shadowing a student, too, can be quite illuminating, as our students today do not face the same issues we did those years ago.

Reading is often a recommendation of language teachers for their learners, yet how often do we read ourselves? As with classroom studies, ELT is not the only topic on the table; general issues in education, technology, personal development, and even reading for pleasure all can contribute to our growth as teachers. Subscription to, or regular library visits for, major ELT journals is an obvious recommendation. The Modern Language Journal is an excellent (SSCI-rated) journal of fairly broad coverage, though it can be somewhat difficult to locate in Korea. ELT Journal is more classroom-focussed, with shorter articles; the most recent issues are freely available on the web. Lots of teachers' magazines and newsletters are freely

available on the web (e.g., [www.eltnews.com](http://www.eltnews.com) and [www.developingteachers.com](http://www.developingteachers.com)), this might also be an opportunity for you to make use of your readings by writing book reviews.

Writing materials is an oft-overlooked aspect of professional development as well, too often dismissed as a money-making scheme rather than an educational process. Perhaps there are "hacks" out there that have created lots of materials, and developing new is nothing more than mindless recycling, but for most of us, there is a great deal of thought going into each page. Questions such as "will my learners react well to this" and "will they learn from this" are critical aspects of teaching, whether creating a single lesson, or a book series. This is distinct from the regular lesson-planning that all good teachers should do (even if not written).

Memberships is perhaps the most

controversial of all professional development activities. Merely paying dues (and in some cases, no dues assessment) is hardly the type of mental processes we have been discussing. On the other hand, members typically receive various notices and materials which will cause the reader to at least consider issues. I would like to suggest that we professionals maintain active memberships in at least three different types of ELT organizations: an international such as TESOL Inc. ([www.tesol.org](http://www.tesol.org)), IATEFL ([www.iatefl.org](http://www.iatefl.org)), or Asia TEFL ([www.asiatefl.org](http://www.asiatefl.org)), one or more "national" organizations such as Korea TESOL ([www.kotesol.org](http://www.kotesol.org)), Korean Association of Teachers of English ([www.kate.org](http://www.kate.org)), or Pan-Korea English Teachers' Association (<http://www.pketa.org>), and one or more local or specialty organizations such as your KOTESOL chapter or a Special Interest Group (SIG, such as KOTESOL's Young Learner's SIG). Membership implies collegiality, and

here we can also consider the remarks in my first column (Dickey, Feb, 2004), association with our peers is a critical aspect of continuing professional development: our own, and assisting that of our colleagues.

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## ***Announcing the Christian Teacher SIG***

- \* Are you a Christian educator?
- \* Are you interested in building a network with other Christian educators?
- \* Are you interested in issues that affect you and your Christian faith and how you can witness within the legal parameters of the Korean educational environment?

*If your answer is "yes" to any of the above questions, then you are invited to get involved. Contact Patrick M. Guilfoyle by email at [patrickguilfoyle@yahoo.ca](mailto:patrickguilfoyle@yahoo.ca) or call 051-246-2337 We are especially in need of a webmaster to help create a homepage for our newly formed special interest group.*



## A is for "association"

Continuing Professional Development is considered an essential feature of professionalism: doctors, lawyers, nurses, accountants, and teachers are all required to periodically undergo certain levels of formal educational courses beyond initial licensure requirements in order to maintain their professional licenses, as are most all other licensed professionals. In addition to mandated training programs, there are typically additional "continuing education" requirements.

The distinction between "training" and "education" has often been described along the lines of "training shows how to do, education informs how to learn how to do, and how to take it further." Professional development, then, incorporates both training and education, and extends beyond to include all types of human development that will affect our professional service. Personally-selected readings related to pedagogy or language would naturally fit within continuing professional development, as would "self-improvement" courses related to interpersonal relations or computer skills- and many would argue that meditation or exercise should be included as well. In the absence of licensure specifications, it is not necessary for us to define precisely what continuing professional development is, or is not.

Professional licensure often requires membership in an identified organization as one aspect of professional development, yet there are often other professional societies that operate alongside the "officially recognized" body. In other cases, such as ELT in EFL environments, there may be no mandated professional association, yet professional bodies thrive nonetheless. These groups, which I will

identify as Associations ("big A"), are a recognized aspect of quality teaching, and membership in such is typically included in a professional resume. Korea TESOL (KOTESOL) is one such organization.

We may also consider what I call "little a" association, the less formal relationships that active professionals build with their peers and colleagues. A few examples would include informal discussions in a teachers' workroom or office concerning how to tackle a current classroom issue, inviting peers to observe and critique a lesson (live or via video), and informal discussions while reading through teacher



training materials (such as articles within this newsletter), as well as participation in email discussion lists. "Little a" association extends to how you identify yourself - are you a teaching professional? Are you proud to be identified as a language teacher? The question is not how you entered teaching, or what level of training you have undertaken, but do you view yourself and those you associate with as teaching professionals?

Korea TESOL provides a number of continuing professional development activities: conferences, chapter meetings, readings (newsletter, proceedings, journal), Special Interest Groups (SIGs), and research publication opportunities (newsletter, conferences, proceedings, and journal). KOTESOL is one of more than

two dozen ELT-related societies in Korea, to say nothing of the dozens of international societies with members in Korea. In other areas of this newsletter you will find specifics on some of the KOTESOL SIGs, such as Teacher Education and Development SIG and Young Learners SIG. You also have the opportunity to begin a SIG if you have a special interest in language learning that is not currently served. Look to the "interests" section of the KOTESOL membership form, or the websites of TESOL, IATEFL, and JALT for some ideas on SIG topics.

A teaching professional should dedicate at least one hour per week to continuing professional development. Associations are one aspect of this. Regardless of whether it comes with a "big A" or "little a" teachers have a duty to include association in their career. Our superior students get an "A" for outstanding work; we too should aim for "A"s.

*Rob Dickey is a past president of Korea TESOL, and has served as facilitator of the Teacher Education & Development SIG. Email: rjdickey@gyeongju.ac.kr*

TESOL International: [www.tesol.org](http://www.tesol.org)  
IATEFL: [www.iatefl.org](http://www.iatefl.org)  
JALT: [www.jalt.org](http://www.jalt.org)

### Two Jeolla Chapters

Effective as of January 1, 2004, there are two chapters in the Jeolla area. The National Executive Council has approved the dissolution of the Jeolla Chapter and its restructuring into two new chapters - North Jeolla Chapter and Gwangju-Jeonnam Chapter - each serving the area in its name. We wish both new chapters much success and growth.

# Paths to Professional Development: Part Six -- Getting it Write



In this sixth and final piece in our series on professional development with English language teachers in Korea, I would like to write about writing. I would also like to thank the editor for giving me this opportunity, and to thank the KOTESOL readers who have emailed me their responses to the pieces.

I hope to encourage you to write about your experiences of professional development for publication in TEC, as it is through this sharing that we understand ourselves better and contribute to the communities of English language teachers and learners in which we live and work.

Interestingly, in spite all the many volumes written on writing, I have read surprisingly few clear definitions of writing – of what it is that we actually do when we write, in a first or second language. One of my favorites is a 15-year old definition from J.A. Berlin, who described writing as “an art, a creative act in which the process – the discovery of the true self – is as important as the product – the self discovered and expressed” (1988, p.484). Admittedly, Berlin is characteristically short on details of what actually happens when one writes, but the connection between writing, discovery/expression of the self, and professional development is especially relevant here.

As English language teachers, we often ask (or require) our students to keep journals of their classroom/language learning experiences. However, we are usually too busy to do so ourselves – I have often said, if I could follow even half the advice I give to my students, I would be twice the person I am today. Why do we ask our students to do this? I have kept journals, and ask my students to do

so, because thoughts and feelings remain as vague and amorphous collections of shapes and colors unless they are processed. One way of processing them, “lower level processing”, is to talk about them, but writing is a significant step up to a higher level.

When we have to write down a complex thought or feeling, we have to give some structure to what was vague and amorphous, we have to create some order out of the cognitive chaos in our heads that we call “thinking”. Although we encourage our students to see writing as a tool for thinking, again, we as teachers do not necessarily see our own writing in this same light. If we did, we would spend more time writing about our experiences, about what worked and what did not, about our thoughts and feelings as teachers and about how these influence what we do and how we do it.

My main purpose for writing this piece is to urge you to write about your experiences of professional development, for publication here or elsewhere, and even for your eyes only. Here are some reasons why you should consider writing an essential part of your professional development:

- Writing about our own experience helps us step back from our thoughts and feelings, and view them with a little less subjectivity and a little more objectivity.
- Writing about the challenges we face and how we responded to them provides a record which we can consult at a later date, to see if we would handle the same situation the same way (usually not).
- Writing regularly about our language teaching and learning beliefs and values enables us to see what changes within us and what remains the same over time, and why.
- Writing about our successes is a form of validation and celebration.
- Writing about our disappointments is cathartic and comforting.
- Sharing our writing with our colleagues develops trust and mutual

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understanding, as well as revealing common concerns .

- Publishing our writing allows us to give back to the communities that support us and gives credibility to the notion of experiential writing as a valid form of professional development.

Many English language teachers I have met in Korea, and elsewhere, have pointed out that they have little time, and if they were to start writing about their daily classroom lives, they might never stop! One simple solution that has worked well for me is to set a simple timing device – I use a kitchen timer – for a short period of time, such as 10 minutes, then start writing about whatever comes into your mind when you think of the day. I write without concern for grammatical correctness – not an easy thing to do for many language teachers! – and stop when the timer starts ringing. I call this “critical incidents” or “critical moments” writing, as I find I often write about some brief incident that occurred in class that day that did not register strongly at the conscious level, but which was clearly something that had been on my mind that day.

As I approach the end of my first year as Director of the School of English at Queen’s University, we have found ourselves placing professional development right at the heart of everything we are doing. As a result, the School is growing and expanding in ways we never imagined. I believe that if you place professional development at the heart of everything you do, you too will find yourself growing and expanding in ways you never imagined.

Good luck with your journey, and Bon Voyage!

# Paths to Professional Development: Part Five -- Dying to Develop



As I write this, I am packing to go back to England for the weekend. As this is my first year living and working in Ontario, Canada, most people understandably assume this trip is so I can take a much-needed break from SARS, West Nile and Mad Cow. But the main purpose of the trip is to spend the weekend sitting at my father's grave, sharing a glass or two of single malt whiskey with my Dad. I was always late with my Father's Day presents.

Last month, on the first anniversary of his death, I was invited to give the opening plenary talk at the annual conference in the Department of Language Teacher Education at the School for International Training in Brattleboro, Vermont. Having spent the year reading a great deal on death and dying, I finally made what eventually seemed to me to be the obvious connections between death, dying and professional development. The title of the plenary talk was, therefore, *The Death of the Self in Professional Development*.

I started with four quotations, one from Shakespeare and three from Shelley, that describe death:

- \* The undiscovered country, from whose borne no traveler returns
- \* Some say that gleams of a remoter world visit the soul in sleep, that death is slumber
- \* For love, and beauty, and delight, there is no death, no change
- \* Death is the veil which those who live call life — they sleep, and it is lifted

These four quotations led me to four questions:

- \* What if the undiscovered country that we travel is our own internal

landscape?

- \* What if the remoter world was not beyond us, but inside us?
- \* What is the relationship between Death and Change? Is one possible without the other?
- \* What would we see if the veil were lifted?

I asked the audience: What advice would you give to a language teacher entering a period of sustained, intense reflection, when they will grow and develop greatly, but when they might also question everything they think they knew about who they are and what they do? There were many good answers from the participants, and after several suggestions had been made, I compared their advice with the advice given in some of the recent literature.

Deb Sims gave some good advice:

- \* Allow yourself time alone
- \* Be aware that sleeping well may be a problem
- \* Be aware that fatigue may be a problem
- \* Allow others to help
- \* Honor your emotions

Likewise, DeeAnn Burnette-Lundquist gave some good advice too.

- \* Anxious panicky feelings can become overwhelming and debilitating
- \* This is a time you feel very out of control of your life
- \* This is a time for much introspection
- \* Open the doors of communication: let those who you care about share this experience with you
- \* Allow those close to you to provide whatever assistance and support they can

However, neither Deb Sims nor DeeAnn Burnette-Lundquist was giving advice to beginning reflective practitioners. Sims' piece is on *The Early Stages of Grief: The First Seven Days* and Burnette-Lundquist's is on *Terminal Illness and the Dying Process*. Time and again, I was struck by the similarity between the advice given to people on death and dying, and

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the advice given to teachers engaging in reflective practice on a deeper level.

Patricia Rose Upczak, in *Death: Tragedy or Transformation*, writes: "Our challenge is to learn how to use the difficult or harsh experiences in our lives to transform ourselves." I re-wrote it as: "Our challenge as language teachers is to learn how to use the difficult or harsh experiences in our language classrooms to transform our professional selves."

For me, the most relevant, recent piece was by Alexandria Kennedy on *Losing a Parent*.

Kennedy writes about the "gut-wrenching awareness." She warns that "daily routines are disrupted, assumptions jolted, values challenged." She explains how important it is to engage in "questioning our selves" but again warns that this will lead to "tearing apart of old structures, challenging old assumptions and beliefs, and disrupting the patterns we have become accustomed to and often become deadened by. This is a painful process, but growth always seems to involve some pain."

Two quotations in particular, though, seemed to capture the ambivalence of wanting to hang on to what we know and resist letting go, whilst at the same time wanting to be better than we are, to realize our full personal and professional potential:

"On a bridge between two worlds – the known one behind and the unknown one before us – we desperately make a stand against the forces that threaten to change our life as we have known it."

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chance to talk and think together with other like-minded teachers.

**Hyunjung:** I'd like to connect your point of reflective teaching and networking with other teachers to the notion of praxis you earlier mentioned. Since I'm planning to continue my graduate study to the PhD level, I'm often asked if I don't enjoy 'teaching' at secondary schools. I often wonder why we should have such a dichotomous view. At least to me, research and teaching are not two separate things: I strongly believe that any practice should be based on theory and any theory should develop through practice. In this regard, I agree that the final stage of any kind of research should be dissemination (or action).

Since you're an expert on action research, what would you suggest to those teachers (like myself) who'd want to integrate their practice and theory? I'm sure many teachers would be interested in action research but often times they do not have resources. Would you have any tips on where they can start?

**Graham:** The limitations of time and the unprofessional working conditions of most

teachers, along with the pressure for immediate action to address most problems, are the most serious obstacle to the issue. Nevertheless, the teacher-researcher movement, or more broadly, the action research movement, has been in existence for 50 years and shows every sign of continuing to grow, not only within education but within business, agriculture, and many other spheres of professional action.

The basic steps are generally for the beginner, preferably in dialogue with a fellow teacher, to select an aspect of practice or a conceptual area, which is either problematic or which they would like to explore further. Then, simple data gathering strategies are used to focus on it: such as, journaling about it, audiotaping some of one's classes, or collecting students' work. Some process of analysis is necessary, and then, if we are dealing with a problem about which we would like to take action, one or two possible actions that might improve the problem should be sketched out. Then try them, and repeat whatever data collection and analysis strategies seem appropriate, and on the basis of that, try to arrive at a conclusion. Did this initiative improve matters? And if so, why? In answering those last questions, the action researcher, the

teacher-researcher is engaged in generating theory, and thus is in a better position to theorize their own practice.

Ideally, of course, the process is cyclical; and ideally, would involve not just the solitary teacher. If more than one professional is involved, you automatically have dissemination, incidentally.

There is a vast literature on this. But let me leave it at that for now.

### The Correspondants

Hyunjung Shin is an MA-ESL candidate in the Department of Second Language Studies at the University of Hawaii at Manoa where she taught advanced reading and writing classes for the English Language Institute. She taught EFL in Korea for six years. E-mail: shyunjung@hotmail.com

Graham Crookes is Associate Professor, Dept. of Second Language Studies, where he is also Director of the UH Manoa English Language Institute. Previously a high school teacher, he is originally from England and has taught English in Malaysian Borneo and Japan, before coming to Hawai'i. E-mail: crookes@hawaii.edu

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"We die over and over again as we have to let go of old beliefs, structures, and ways of being. We die to who we were."

This might all seem like so much pseudo-philosophical, self-indulgent navel-gazing. But the relationships between facing those things we fear most and changing in ways that permanently re-shape our

relationships with ourselves, and growing and developing in ways that positively impact on our work as language teachers are too great to ignore.

Professional development can be difficult and distressing, because change can be difficult and distressing. But without such development, there can only be, at best, stability to the point of stagnation. At worst, death. Not of the physical self, but

of the heart and soul of what enables us to go beyond teaching and learning, to inspiring and transforming. As our students go from Beginner to Advanced, as we go from novice to expert, we must die to who we were, if we wish to live our lives to the fullest.

\* All of the articles referred to in this piece can be found at the website:

<http://www.death-dying.com>

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Contact **Adam Turner** at ifli@hotmail.com for more information. To join, go to <http://groups.msn.com/KOTESOLWESIG/> and click on *Join Now*. Then follow the directions.

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## TED SIG

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by James Trotta

With summer approaching (and hopefully bringing lighter workloads), many people will have some time to reflect on what

they've been doing (and not doing) in the classroom. Why not think out loud? The TED SIG welcomes reflections, questions, suggested classroom practices, and anything else that might lead us to better teaching.

We're not only looking for posts about experiences in the classroom, but also with training programs. If you're taking (or have taken) a teacher training course in Korea or via distance learning, we'd like to hear your experiences. If you're thinking about starting a program to get more qualified, you can gather information from members of the TED SIG.

If you have any resources to share we'd like to hear about them. Have you read a good book or an enlightening article recently? Do you know a good website for English teachers? Do you have an activity that helps your learners? If you answered "yes" to any of these questions or if you have questions of your own, then the TED SIG is where you want to be.

Topics that have been discussed recently on the TED SIG email list include EAP, online and distance learning, calls for papers, and Oxford's grammar and children's days. [http://groups.yahoo.com/group/KoTESOL\\_TED\\_SIG/](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/KoTESOL_TED_SIG/)



# Paths to Professional Development:

## Part Four -- Creating the Necessary Conditions



In that last TEC piece on professional development (PD), I put forward some simple visual representations to show some of the

relationships in our schools, our classrooms and within ourselves, claiming that it is in the spaces between the points of the triangle wherein developmental reflection occurs.

If I were to draw another simple triangular representation here, the link between the theory and practice of PD would be *conditions necessary*. That is, a good understanding of the theory of PD – frameworks and models, for example – matched with an equally good understanding of the practice – what needs to be done – is still insufficient, in the absence of the conditions necessary for the theory and practice to inform each other.

In 2000, I wrote about five key conditions that I believe must exist in order for PD with language teachers to happen (Bailey, Curtis, & Nunan, 2001). The following year, based on another year of experience and reflection, I expanded that list to eight conditions for a *KATE* article (Curtis, 2001). By now, 2003, there are twelve conditions. It's not that all of these conditions have to be met for PD to take place, but in my experience, the more of these conditions that exist, the more likely it is that positive, professional change and growth will occur.

**1. Time** At the heart of growth is change, which is the essence of all PD, and change takes time. Individual language teachers, their students, and their institutions need sufficient time for PD to take place. Insufficient time often results in the *appearance* of change, but it is not real.

**2. Trust** It is essential that those “being developed” and those “doing the developing” trust each other’s motives and methods completely. Without this

trust, we are not willing to expose our professional selves to the scrutiny of our peers, and without such openness, real change is not possible.

**3. Choice** Professional development *activities* can be forced upon language teachers. Professional development can not, as activity and awareness are not the same thing. Teachers must be allowed *to choose* which PD activities to engage in, if the activities are to have a long-lasting, positive effect.

**4. Institutional Support** Institutional support for PD can take many forms, for example, providing teachers with financial support and/or release time to attend/present at conferences, to follow in-service, on-line courses, providing books, journals and articles all show that the institution is investing in its teachers.

**5. Recognition** Recognition by peers and students of our PD as teachers is very important, and recognition by the institution of the time and energy committed teachers give to such activities may be a key factor in encouraging teachers to engage in PD activities.

**6. Judgmental vs Developmental** Both of these aspects of teacher evaluation are important, but they should not be confused with each other. When we are being judged, for example, for contract renewal purposes, we show what we *know*. When we are trying to develop, we need to focus on what we have *yet to learn*.

**7. Better Teaching and Learning** One measure of the effectiveness of PD is that it results in a richer and more rewarding learning experience for the students. It is difficult for a teacher to develop and for this *not* to show in his/her teaching, but if we have our learners in mind in all our PD activities, we may develop even more.

**8. Reciprocity/Mutuality** Linked to trust, issues of power, position and status are important here. For example, classroom observation is often carried out by senior teaching staff of junior teachers. However, observation the other way around – of the seniors by the juniors – is much less

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common. Result: All judgment. No development.

**9. Space** Internal and external space – inside your head, and around you – are essential for reflection. If your mind is always full of thoughts, all clamoring for attention, you cannot hear yourself think. Similarly, if you are always surrounded by crowds, you will not be able to step back from yourself and reflect.

**10. Documentation** We all have enough paperwork in our lives already, but many changes are subtle and take place over longer periods of time. So without some kind of text – including audio and video recordings – to map and record the changes, we may not see them as clearly.

**11. Clarity of Purpose** Using transferable skills, if we can apply our teachers’ abilities to create clear, assessable aims and objectives for our language lessons to our own PD action plans, we will be able to create clear goals for our development, whilst staying open to different possible paths.

**12. A Partner** Our PD book was subtitled *The self as source* to highlight as the self can be a very powerful source for change and growth, and PD activities can be carried out solo. However, that said, it is usually beneficial to be with someone else going through similar changes, to share to exchange and to be with professionally.

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# Paths to Professional Development:

## Part Three -- Creating Spaces and Mapping Relationships



In the first of these articles, we looked at the reasons why busy English language teachers do and do not engage in professional

language teachers regularly, and most replies identify relationships such as teacher-student and student-student, as well as test-syllabus and knowledge-skills relationships, and at the more macro level, relationships among the school community, the national, and international community.

development, and in the second article, at how seeing ourselves on video can be a powerful way to learn more about our teaching selves.

In the third of these articles, I would like us to pursue this notion of knowing our professional selves. How would you define

A simple way of visualizing such three-part relationships is displayed in Figure 1.

I would like to suggest that our professional development activities as language teachers can be thought of as a way of developing our understanding of an often-overlooked but essential tripartite educational relationship: that between Me, Myself and I (Figure 2).

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As Diane Larsen-Freeman has noted, our views of teachers have not expanded to anywhere near the extent that our views of learners have developed. One reason for this might be that in our eagerness to be learner-centered teachers, we lost sight of our selves. Professional development, then, is a way of regaining this perspective.

I realize that this way of conceiving of professional development can be accused of being, at best, overly introspective, at worst, self-indulgent. But I would disagree. As we say in *PPD:SaS*, for any kind of teacher professional development to be considered successful, one of the outcomes has to be more effective teaching and learning, however that is defined.

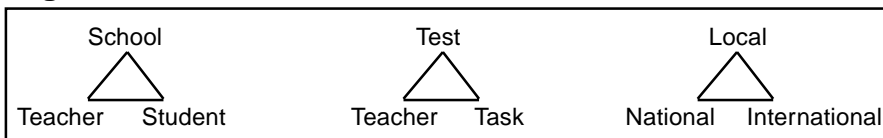
It is in the space between the three points of the Me, Myself and I triangle that our awareness and knowledge of what we do, how and why we do it like that (and not some other way) grows. This may well seem somewhat esoteric, but we can work in this space without sinking into the existential quicksand of French and German philosophy, and in ways that are practical and applicable in our everyday teaching lives.

To conclude, this approach to professional development is important because it shifts our focus from *How can I get better at what I do?*, which is a good question but one which only partially addresses the goal, to *How can I step back from myself and see my teaching selves as my students and other teachers might see them?*

One key result of this way of thinking is that the changes we are attempting to bring about may not – and do not have to – result in changes in what we do, but may be more about a changed understanding of what we do and why we do it that way.

*\* If you do, please send it to me, as I'd love to read it.*

Figure 1.



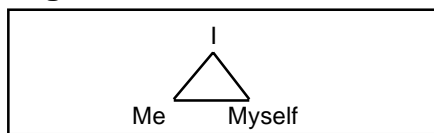
“teaching”? It is interesting how many of us engage in activities, sometimes for years, without regularly stopping to ask ourselves exactly what it is that we are doing and why. Having worked in many other professions, from hotel and catering to health care, I find language teaching to be one of those professions wherein the busyness of doing often seems to preclude adequate reflection on the business of being.

If each of you reading this article now were to put down your copy of *TEC* and write down your own, personal definition of “teaching” – and I wish you would\* – there would be as many different definitions as there are readers. This is one of the things that gives our work as language teachers meaning – the way in which we understand it depends on who and where we are at that point in time, and changes as we change and move on.

For me, teaching is about the formation of relationships. It is that simple. And that complex. Professional development, then, is a way of identifying and mapping these relationships. What relationships can you identify in your English language teaching and learning? I ask this question to English

In our book, *Pursuing Professional Development: The Self as Source*, (Bailey, Curtis & Nunan, 2001), we cite Leo van Lier’s use of the notion of estrangement. I have extended and applied his use of the term, to suggest that what we are trying to do in our professional development is to create some distance between our different selves.

Figure 2.



In the last issue of *TEC*, we explored the use of video in our professional development, and one reason video can be so powerful is because it is so good at estranging us from our selves. Comments from teachers seeing themselves for the first time on video, such as “Do I really sound like that?” show the way in which it is like seeing someone else. Part of this is because we have grown up in cultures dominated by television, so seeing anyone on the small screen, even if it is ourselves, is like seeing someone (else) in a daytime drama television show.

# Paths to Professional Development:

## Part Two -- Moving Pictures



In the previous *TEC* (Vol6,6) I presented arguments for and against Already-Very-Busy English language

teachers in Korea engaging in professional development activities. The list of reasons why we need to was significantly longer and, I hope, more persuasive the list of reasons why we might not.

Since that first piece, I have received a number of emails along the lines of “Yes, Andy, that’s all well and good. But how?” Good question. In this piece, then, having considered the question of *Why*, I would like to start the discussion of *How*.

In Korea, I have been asked several times if I can recommend low-tech, low-impact, low risk ways of developing professionally. I would like to suggest video recording your teaching. Although teachers have been recording their teaching as a way of learning about their classrooms for more than 30 years, it still surprises me how infrequently we use this medium in our professional development.

Although “low” is a relative notion, based on what I have seen in Korea, I would say that video cameras are no longer considered “hi tech” here. Video cameras in classrooms can be disruptive. But if the lesson is interesting, relevant and well planned, it is surprising how quickly students and the teacher forget about the camera, making this a relatively low impact approach.

Risk, however, is a big issue in professional development. I have often been quoted – and misquoted – expressing my view that *there is no professional development without exposure*. By this I mean that we are acknowledging that there are gaps in our knowledge, skills and/or understanding when we engage in

professional development. This may seem fundamental to learning anything, but it is not always easy for teachers, especially those in particular cultures, to see and to say this.

But with video recording your own teaching, if you decide where and when the recording is made, if you allow an adequate “acclimatization period” for yourself and your students to get used to the camera being there, and if you watch the tape yourself, you largely eliminate the risk.

In Chapter 7 of our book *Pursuing Professional Development: The self as source* (Heinle & Heinle, 2001), Kathi Bailey, David Nunan and I discuss our experiences of using video in our professional development. I would like to present here an abridged version of a **Teachers’ Voices** section entitled “Andy’s Film Debut” (pp.119-120), as this captures many of the pros and cons of video as a professional development tool.

### “The first time I saw myself on video, I didn’t.

It was many years ago, on my first teaching practice. I was in a school in the North East of England, in a grim, bleak place, suffering from nearly fifty- percent unemployment. Not surprisingly, such an environment did not do much to engender in the local children a positive disposition towards learning in schools (or being in school at all).

To compensate for my lack of teaching experience, I was “power dressing”, which meant wearing dark colors. So there I was, dressed head to toe in black, standing in front of a floor-to-ceiling black chalkboard. The video camera was the only one in the school, and did not work very well, especially in the low-light conditions of the dark room where I was teaching.

When we sat down to watch the video of my teaching, there was an embarrassed

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silence, until I started to laugh uncontrollably, breaking the tension and giving permission to the other (light-skinned) teachers to do the same.

There I was. Not. All of the various darkneses had combined to produce a shadowing effect, in which all that could be seen on the video recording was a piece of white chalk, dancing in the darkness, a dazzling white smile, and almost nothing else.

This episode taught me many things, not least about technology’s limitations when it comes to capturing teaching and learning on tape. Many years after this unpromising television debut, I have realized that there is a useful analogy here for the way a video camera actually masks what goes on in classrooms, as well as, paradoxically, at the same time shamelessly and unflinchingly recording everything that passes before it. The idea that “the camera never lies” is itself a great lie, as anyone knows who’s ever seen how cinematic special effects are created.

However, this technological weakness can also be a strength. In my case, the camera didn’t record what was going on in my head and my heart. That is, it couldn’t record what I was thinking and feeling. To record these things, I needed to look to my journal entries or the audio tape recordings of my pre- and post-lesson observation discussions with other teachers. But the very fact that the camera did not record these internal workings was of value, as it helped to show the difference between what I was feeling and thinking inside, versus the professional teaching persona I was projecting to the outside world, most immediately to the students sitting in front of me, then to my teaching peers and beyond.”



# Paths to Professional Development:

## Part One



It was so good to be back in Seoul, for the annual KOTESOL convention. Travelling from Canada to Korea for the weekend

- o Aversion to/Dislike of ‘Theories’ and ‘Experts’
- o Aversion to/Dislike of ‘Fashions and ‘Fads’
- o Interference with the Teaching Process - Distractions and Divided Attention
- o Reluctance to/Resistance to Change - ‘If it ain’t broke, don’t fix it’
- o Fear of Confronting ‘The Self’

meant spending more than 50 hours in transit for barely as much time there! But it was definitely worth it. The chance to hear teachers talk about their daily classroom realities and challenges is always an inspiring and humbling experience.

In this first of what we hope we will be a series of articles on professional development (PD or CPD as it’s called these days = Continuing Professional Development) and the start of shared and on-going dialog, I’d like to present this two-part, introductory piece. In the first part, I summarize some of the main reasons for and against professional development, based on the first part of the workshop we did at the conference. In the second part of the piece, I take a more holistic and whole-person view of the reason why professional development is so important.

In the PD workshop, we started with a list of good reasons why busy language teachers do not engage in professional development activities. I’ll present that list here, partly because such lists – short and simplistic though they are – can still serve as provocative starting points for further discussion.

The first five items on this list can be prefaced with “Lack of”

### Teacher Development: Why Not?

- o Time - Too Busy
- o Energy - Too Tired
- o Motivation - Purposes and Benefits
- o Support – Institutional
- o Encouragement - Colleagues, Family and Friends

Which if these, if any, are barriers to your own professional development? Are there additional barriers in your environment not listed here?

After looking at this list in the workshop, we then looked briefly at a list of reasons why we do need to engage in professional development activities even though we are busy.

### Teacher Development: Why?

- + Acquisition of New Knowledge and Skills
- + Upgrading Present Knowledge and Skills
- + New Techniques
- + New Materials and/or Equipment
- + Problem-solving
- + Variety and Novelty
- + Changes in the Context and Setting
- + External ‘Initiatives’
- + Income and Prestige
- + Promotion and Prospects
- + Empowerment
- + Avoiding ‘Routinization’
- + Burnout Prevention
- + Networking
- + Professional Interest/Support Groups
- + Respect as ‘Professionals’
- + Communication with the Wider Community

Though I’m tempted to annotate this list, and give a brief explanation of some of the less obvious reasons, I’m not going to at this stage, as I’d like these two lists to serve as the starting point for an on-going discussion. How do you respond to these lists?

During my presentations, I made one point that a number of conference participants picked up on and asked me

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about: “The fastest and most efficient way to kill something is to purify it,” I said. This comes from my training in the life sciences and from my time working in hospitals in England. Purity is often seen as a highly desirable state of being: a message reinforced from all sides, from religious beliefs to advertising and marketing campaigns. But, as Charles Darwin showed, a really pure living organism cannot adapt to changes in its environment. Even the slightest and most momentary change will render it obsolete. Darwin’s famous phrase *survival of the fittest* often struck me as one of the most commonly misunderstood and misappropriated of all scientific conclusions, as it had nothing whatsoever to do with physical strength. The word ‘fit’ here means ‘suitability’ as in ‘best fit’, best able to adapt to changing environmental conditions.

We all know, at some level, that change is inevitable, whether we like it or not. We may not like it, but we know this to be true. If there is no growth, there is, at best, stagnation. I don’t mean to be melodramatic – or to beat the biological metaphor to within an inch of its life – but at worst, without growth, death is the only option. Not of the body but of the spirit. I mean the death of passion. Of enthusiasm, of joy of all those things that make teaching, for me, the best job in world. I have tried others professional paths, from health care to hotel management, but teaching and teacher education have been by far the more rewarding for me – though not, sadly, in the financial or material sense!

Many of us are by now familiar with Abraham Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs, with basic physiological or bodily needs at the bottom of the pyramid, followed by the need for safety and security, then

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## Conclusion

You have read the books, articles, and the concepts that helped you develop your own teaching theory or practical teaching ideas. Writing up your experiences or articulating your philosophy is your way of helping other colleagues and developing yourself professionally. After the paper has been published, someone will read and comment on your work. It will help you open up and learn. As interest grows, people add other evidence

and theories to your ideas. Publishing a paper might be a professional obligation, but one which can be fun and fruitful.

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## The Author

Hee-Jung Jung is a Ph.D candidate at Washington State University. She has a BA in English and an MA in Education from Washington State University. She has taught English in an elementary school in Korea. Email: [hjung@mail.wsu.edu](mailto:hjung@mail.wsu.edu)

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Now, down to business. The time has come to get on the YL bandwagon. Join the Young Learners' Special Interest Group. Go to [www.kotesol.org/younglearn/](http://www.kotesol.org/younglearn/) to see what we have on offer. All KOTESOL members are invited to join, as we are excited to continue building a community of YL teachers. Even if you do not teach young learners you will find our community worthwhile.

New developments? TEC has a new column devoted to YL issues. Expect a broad appeal to the great diversity that makes up KOTESOL. Check this month's issue for an action research project. Also, this month you will find new worksheets and surveys added to our Yahoo discussion board. That way you will find it easy to begin productive dialogues. Hope to hear from you soon!

## KTT

by Douglas Margolis

If you missed the KOTESOL International conference, you missed four KTT presentations: TJ Everest, from Pusan University of Foreign Studies, wowed a jam packed room with a new presentation about teaching supra-segmental pronunciation features, such as stress,

rhythm, and intonation; James Ranalli elaborated a listening comprehension instructional plan that promoted both top down and bottom up listening skills via microteaching; Stephanie Downey offered a workshop on error correction techniques; and yours truly gave a new presentation on motivation strategies.

In addition to these presentations, KTT was also blessed with several new volunteers, including Lilia Punzalan, Don Makarchuk, Tory Thorkelson, and Melanie van den Hoven. We truly appreciate their participation. Moreover, KTT has been preparing a training needs survey to identify what areas of training are most needed. If you receive one of these surveys in the mail, please help us by completing and returning it. Your participation will help us improve our training workshops and make them more worthwhile to you.

Finally, as always, anyone interested in joining KTT, please contact me. The primary requirement for being a KTT member is current KOTESOL membership. Even if you lack confidence in your presentation skills, we could use your help and support with logistics, presentation development, and other areas. If interested, please send an email to me ([dpm123@teacher.com](mailto:dpm123@teacher.com)). I look forward to hearing from you.

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social needs, ego needs, and at the top of the pyramid is the need for self-actualization. My understanding of self-actualization here is the need that each of us has to realize our full potential. This, for me, is at the heart of the need for CPD; it enables us to realize our full potential, professionally and personally.

This first piece has been a brief consideration of Why. In Part Two of *Paths to Professional Development*, we can start to explore How.

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Dr Andy Curtis is the Director of the School of English at Queen's University in Canada. He recently completed a year as Visiting Professor at the School for International Training in the USA.

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