

The  
**Teacher Trainer**

A PRACTICAL JOURNAL FOR THOSE WHO TRAIN, MENTOR AND EDUCATE TESOL TEACHERS

Inside

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Includes regular series:

Observation and Feedback, News in Our Field, Trainer Resources and Materials, Article Watch and Publications Received.

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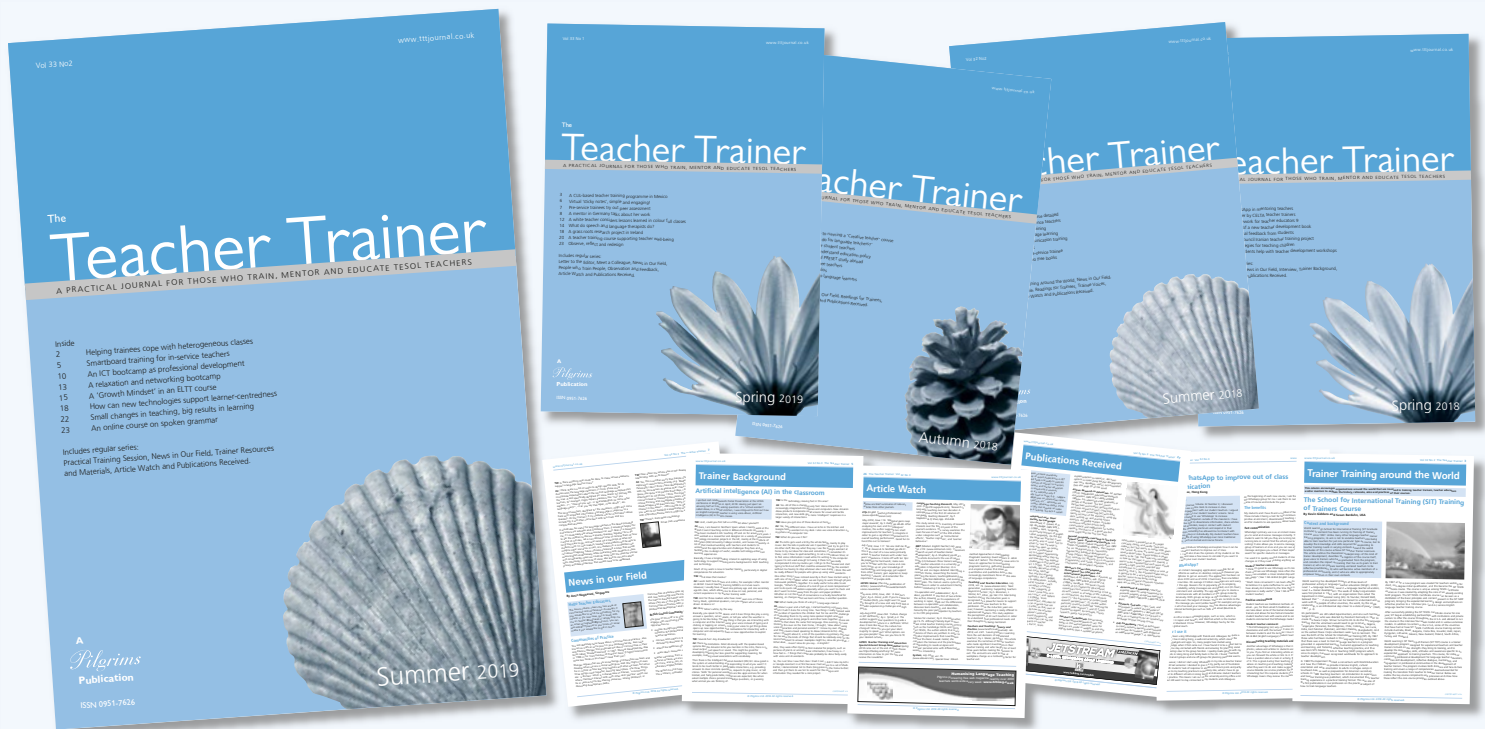
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# The Teacher Trainer

A PRACTICAL JOURNAL FOR THOSE WHO TRAIN, MENTOR AND EDUCATE TESOL TEACHERS



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# Editorial

Welcome to the third issue of our thirty third volume.

I would like to encourage you to write for the journal. Our established columns are:

Author's corner, Book review, Conference reports, Current research, E-Matters, Feeder fields, Games for TT, Have you read...? In-service training, Interviews, Language matters, Literature matters, Meet a colleague, Observation and feedback, People who train people, Training round the world, Practical training session, Pre-service training, Process options, Q and A, Readings for trainees, Mentoring, Teacher selection and evaluation, Trainee voices, Trainer background, Trainer materials, Trainer mistakes, and Trainer training.

We also take articles that do not fall neatly under the headings above so don't be put off if your idea doesn't fit there! (See page 16 for more details)

This issue is available, as usual, in this print edition and also by subscribing online at: [www.tttjournal.co.uk](http://www.tttjournal.co.uk). Also online is a free selection of back articles and some extras in the TTTJ Plus section!

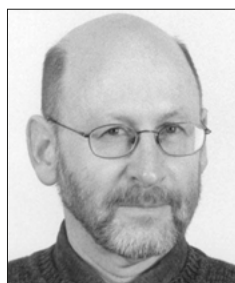
I hope you enjoy reading Volume 33 Number 3! Write for us too!

All good wishes

Tessa Woodward  
The Editor



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## About "The Teacher Trainer"

The Teacher Trainer is a practical journal for those involved in modern language, especially TESOL, teacher training. Whether you are a teacher who tends to be asked questions by others in the staff room, or a Director of studies with an office of your own, whether you are a mentor or a course tutor on an exam course, an inspector going out to schools or a teacher educator at a university, this journal is for you. Our aim is to provide a forum for ideas, information and news, to put fellow professionals in touch with each other and to give all those involved in training, mentoring and educating teachers a feeling of how trainers in other fields operate, as well as building up a pool of experience within our own field.

The journal comes out three times a year and makes use of a variety of formats e.g. articles, letters, comments, quotations, interviews, cartoons, spoofs. If the idea is good and useful to trainers, we'll print it no matter what voice you choose to express it in.

# From traditions to frameworks for teacher training short courses and workshops

By Briony Beaven, Germany

## Introduction

Many readers of this article could probably testify to the continuing survival of one-off teacher training workshops and short courses in defiance of the many criticisms of these formats. I will examine reasons for their survival and suggest that four generally recognised traditions of teacher education can supply frameworks which may help us to avoid an unprincipled, ad hoc approach to such events.

## Scepticism and good reasons

One-off teacher workshops, typically lasting from one to three hours, are common in in-service teacher education. In the literature of teacher education these discrete, finite episodes tend to be regarded with some scepticism: 'Teacher learning is best promoted by cycles of related activities,' writes Roberts (1998: 46) while Webster-Wright (2009:2) states, 'Although, with a nod to adult learning theories, PD [Professional Development] programs are [now]more flexible and learner-centered, more engaging and interactive, many remain as episodic updates of information delivered in a didactic manner, separated from engagement with authentic work experiences.' One-offs or very brief mini-courses continue to flourish however, for practical and organisational reasons. For many language schools and cultural institutes they are viewed as the only financially and temporally feasible mode of teacher education, for the following reasons:

- The school budgeting system does not allow for extensive in-service teacher education,
- Those who deliver institutional teacher education are not full-time teacher trainers, but teachers or academic directors who take a little time out of their already busy jobs to run training sessions,
- Since in some contexts the teachers are freelance and have to give up their own time to attend teacher training events, they are not willing to commit to longer training courses,
- Apart from workshops and mini-courses, individual or group community-based CPD (Diaz-Maggioli 2018) might be a viable mode of teacher development, but to get this off the ground there may need to be a one-off workshop in which possible routes are presented and clarified, particularly in non-staffroom, freelance teacher contexts.

It seems that operational and pragmatic considerations, and a wish to do something for the teachers, even if it is not ideal, will ensure the survival of compact courses for some time to come.

"There are four traditions of teacher education from which we might derive possible approaches to our short courses."

## The four traditions of teacher education

There are four traditions of teacher education from which we might derive possible approaches to our short courses. Ideas of appropriate ways to educate teachers of English have changed with time, partly owing to the ascendancy of different views of how English is best taught and learned, but also because of evolving notions of how and what teachers should learn. These changes have manifested themselves through four generally recognised traditions of teacher education (Diaz Maggioli 2012, Johnson 2009, Richards & Lockhart 1994, Wallace 1991), based on four conceptions of teaching:

- 1 Teaching as a *craft* – copying or imitating an expert's teaching behaviour and recommendations,
- 2 Teaching as *applied science* – public theory in the form of lectures, books and articles is viewed as the basis for effective teaching,
- 3 Teaching as *reflective practice* – surfacing direct experiences of teaching and routine classroom behaviour, reflecting on and rethinking these,
- 3 Teaching as *participation in a professional community* – the situated, contextual development of the social professional identity of teachers.

Although the four traditions can be viewed as emerging sequentially, in response to changing educational needs, this does not imply that each tradition disappeared from use in teacher education once the next one had evolved. Rather, there has always been a movement back and forth between the traditions, according to local needs, wishes, context and resources. A simple example of this exists in my own family history: My great-grandfather was a student at one of the earliest national teacher training colleges in Great Britain, gaining his teaching certificate in 1883. His teacher education sat in the *applied science* tradition. A generation later my grandmother learned to be a teacher through apprenticeship on the still common pupil-teacher scheme. Her teacher education was within the *craft* tradition.

## Workshops based on a framework derived from a tradition

If we accept the premise that one-off workshops and mini-courses are not going to be abandoned any time soon, perhaps we should work out how to plan them conscientiously, catering for teachers in our contexts. The question is, how can we create a bridge from credible frameworks to our ninety minutes or three hours with teachers in a language school on a Friday afternoon?

The answer will involve attention to teachers' needs and expectations, bearing in mind their training to date, the kind and amount of teaching experience they have had and the purpose of the training event. The variety of possible purposes can be illustrated by two example questions a teacher education planner might ask themselves: Is the training event intended to transmit knowledge and skills or to encourage critical and innovative practice? Is the focus on individual or collective development? In the light of answers to such questions, we can adopt the most appropriate framework for a given workshop, remembering that the frameworks derived from all four traditions may be relevant today, dependent on the target group and purpose of the workshop. Summaries of four teacher training workshops, one based on each framework, are provided below to illustrate how the four frameworks might be used in workshops and very short teacher training courses:

### 1 Workshop based on the traditional craft model of teacher education

A teacher trainer teaches a model English lesson to teachers/trainees and immediately afterwards they fill in an evaluation form such as the one below.

#### Did the trainer...

- Vary interaction patterns?
- Limit teacher talking time?
- Clarify meaning of new language items?
- Check meaning of new language items (CCQs)?
- Give clear instructions?
- Check instructions (ICQs)?
- Monitor activities?

The evaluation form is designed to ensure that the teachers/trainees notice certain micro-skills that the trainer deems important. A right and a wrong way to teach is assumed and the workshop is planned with the aim of inculcating certain teaching behaviours that the teachers/trainees should later reproduce in their own classrooms.

### 2 Workshop based on the applied science model of teacher education

A teacher trainer plans and delivers a mini-course to encourage teachers with only a short, initial teaching qualification to read professional ELT literature.

#### 'Nothing is as practical as a good theory': how professional reading can benefit your teaching

##### Session 1

Look back at your reading histories – not just in ELT

Learn how to select professional reading

Optimise your reading experience for teaching impact

Read and react to a short, professional text (Homework)

##### Session 2

Share reactions to texts from Session 1 homework

Follow a guided approach to reading a practical ELT article

Use it to create one or two teaching activities.

##### Session 3

Try out and report on the teaching activities

Consider classroom implications of further professional reading.

Choose further reading and plan for linking reading to your teaching in future

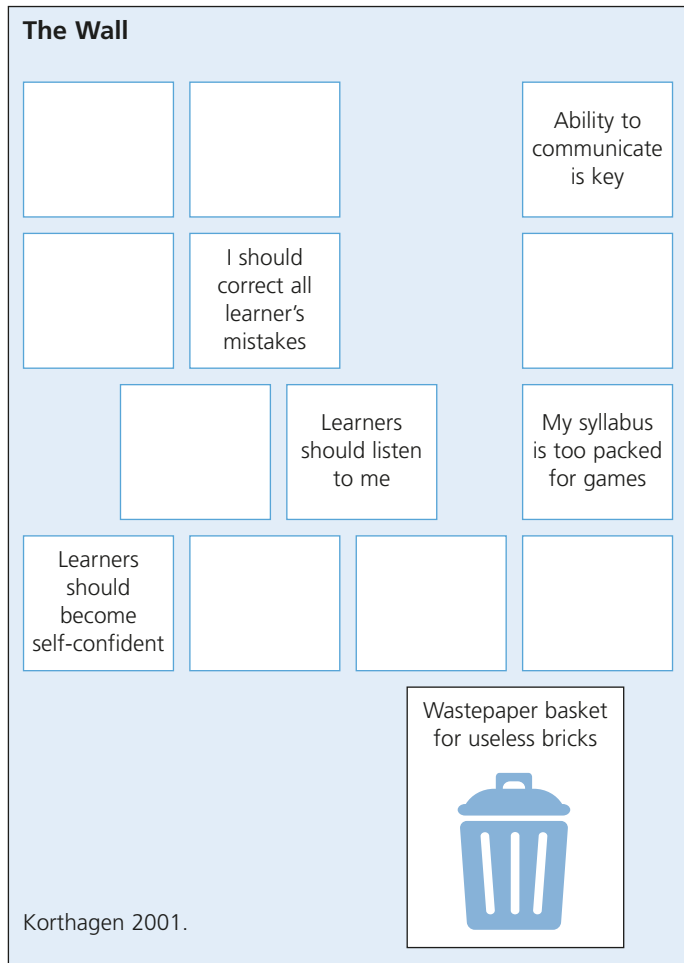
Beaven 2018.

The trainer who has devised a mini-course, such as the one above, assumes that the applied science tradition is valuable and can lead to teacher learning but that for many teachers professional reading needs to be integrated into, and made relevant to, practice if it is to seem worth the effort.

### 3 Workshop based on the reflective practice model of teacher education

A teacher trainer sets up a practical kinaesthetic activity with the aim of raising teachers' awareness of their personal teaching theories and values. Teachers build a personalised teaching wall using 'bricks' (drawn on paper) provided by the trainer and filling in blank pieces of A4 paper to make their own bricks. They build the wall placing the bricks where they want them and can throw away any bricks that do not represent their values. The diagram below represents wall-building in progress. The teacher building this wall has provisionally placed some of the bricks provided and is still considering what to write on the blank bricks and where to place them on the final wall. Their final wall may contain more or fewer bricks.

continued >>>



The bricks have to be placed with a teacher's most important principles at the bottom of the wall and the others on top. This leads to in-depth reflection 'because one cannot place one brick on top of another without manifesting certain ideas about relations between the various goals and values' (Korthagen 2001: 167).

The trainer assumes that deciding where to place the bricks will help the teachers to reflect on the relationships between their different teaching goals, and that this will lead to greater consistency between the teachers' stated principles and their classroom actions.

#### 4 Workshop based on the participation in a professional community model of teacher education

A facilitator manages a series of teacher meetings and online contacts. The meetings may be one-offs in terms of topics covered but the group of teachers share the same or similar teaching contexts and meet regularly.

#### British Council Teacher Activity Groups (TAGs)

Semi-formal continuing professional development (CPD) sessions

Teachers from same area with similar contexts

Meet to practice English, share teaching ideas and techniques

Regular group meetings over a medium or long period of time

Face-to-face and online

Teacher-led choice of topics

British Council 2019 (Under Beaven in the bibliography below)

The organisers and facilitator assume that teachers benefit from getting to know and to trust each other and from being involved in each other's teaching experiences. This assumption is based on a belief in Communities of Practice, groups of professionals who come together because they 'share a passion for something they know how to do and who interact regularly to learn how to do it better' (Wenger-Trayner 2015) and on the idea that social interaction and collaboration will lead to joint production of resources that can positively affect the group members' professional practice.

#### Helping teacher trainers to use the frameworks for their short sessions: A trainer training session

- 1 Familiarise the teacher trainers with the four traditions, as described above.
- 2 Show and discuss the four example workshop summaries above.
- 3 Set up an experiential activity to:
  - a provide the teacher trainers with practice in categorising session plans according to framework,
  - b demonstrate the potential for fruitful incorporation of the four frameworks into their session planning,
  - c give trainers the opportunity to create a session outline based on one of the frameworks for their own training contexts.

In this activity groups of three participants are asked to study two out of the four sample teacher training workshop plans briefly described below. Each plan uses one of the frameworks derived from the four traditions. The teacher trainers have to answer four questions. The questions require participants to identify the represented tradition and note reasons for their choice, to decide on the aim of the activity/workshop and to consider whether and how they could use or adapt the materials or the framework in their contexts.

- 4 Participants who have studied workshop plans A and B find a partner who has studied workshops C and D, and thus everyone gets to know a wider range of materials.

- 5 The trainer trainer conducts feedback on the activity, clarifying the framework choices with reasons. Alternative suggestions can be discussed and justified or rejected. Additionally, the trainer trainer elicits the participants' thoughts about possible use or adaptation of the materials in their contexts.
- 6 If there is time, participants create outlines of new sessions based on one of the frameworks for use in their own training situations.

This session leads to better understanding of the four frameworks in teacher education practice by means of understanding, analysing, interpreting, classifying, evaluating and, possibly, creating (Anderson & Krathwohl 2001).

### **Titles and brief descriptions of the four sample workshop plans for the trainer training session**

- A Reading in role: Teachers read an academic or professional article as if they were a designated type of reader. Reader roles will, for example, typically include readers who are likely to react positively to the content of the article, others who are likely to be critical of the author's points and a third group who have some personal stake in the ideas presented by the author. Still in role, the teacher trainers then participate in a panel discussion with a fellow participant who is in the role of the 'author'. (Applied science).
- B Object and memory: Teachers choose and show an object that represents their teaching beliefs and explain their reasons for choosing that object. (Reflective practice).
- C Teacher storytelling: Teachers tell a real-life story from their classrooms or a story related to their work as an English teacher, respond to colleagues' questions and evaluate the collective experience. (Participation in a professional community).
- D Practise, evaluate and personalise: The teacher educator sets up and conducts a classroom activity with the teachers in the training room, advantages and disadvantages are considered, and then teachers create an example connected to a unit in their coursebook or a point in their syllabus. (Modified craft).

### **Conclusion**

The four frameworks described above are rooted in a cumulative understanding of teacher learning so that later traditions do not invalidate earlier ones and no framework is mutually exclusive. They are often regarded as approaches that shape whole teacher education courses, and indeed one or the other of them frequently does characterise an entire programme. However, we can also profitably situate our short sessions within the frameworks; judicious selection or combination enables us to take a principled and productive approach to workshops and mini-courses.

\*Slides with summaries of the four example teacher training workshops are available on [www.slideshare.net/BrionyBeaven/frameworks-for-teacher-training-sessions-and-workshops-pdf](http://www.slideshare.net/BrionyBeaven/frameworks-for-teacher-training-sessions-and-workshops-pdf)

Contact the author for the full trainer training session materials with references.

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# Observation and Feedback

## Six tips for realising a dialogic approach in feedback on observed teaching

By Katie Webb, UK

### Introduction

The feedback that trainers and mentors give to teacher trainees after observing their practice plays a vital role in their early professional development (Hyland and Lo, 2006: 16). It has been argued that giving trainees the opportunity to reflect on their teaching practice in the post lesson feedback event will better prepare them in their short and long-term endeavour of learning how to teach (Chick, 2015; Copland, Ma and Mann, 2009; Brandt, 2008). Moreover, it is widely accepted that teachers need to become reflective practitioners (Brandt, 2008). Despite this, there is limited opportunity for trainees to reflect, during their training, due to time constraints. One way to overcome this challenge and promote reflection is for trainers and mentors to adopt a dialogic approach during the feedback event.

### What is a dialogic approach?

Discourse can be described along a continuum from 'authoritative' to 'dialogic'. In authoritative discourse the views of the speaker are unchallengeable and alternative perspectives are not acknowledged. In dialogic discourse, on the other hand, meaning is negotiated between the conversation partners, and knowledge is co-constructed (Louw, Watson and Jimarkon, 2014: 746). In the context of a post-observed lesson feedback event, those who adopt an authoritative approach when delivering feedback are evaluative. They are direct in telling trainees what went well and what did not and are likely to dominate the conversation. They will give advice and explicit suggestions on what the trainees should do to improve and will therefore use phrases such as *'You should/should not have done this...'*, *'Why did you not...?'*, *'It would have been better to...'*, etc. These comments convey that the views and opinions of the trainer are 'truth'. This infers that, in order to become effective teachers, trainees need to unequivocally follow the advice of the trainer.

In contrast, those who adopt a dialogic approach allow space for trainees to reflect on, articulate and clarify their understandings of good teaching practice (Chick, 2015; Copland and Mann, 2010). Instead of being direct, trainers will ask questions that aim to uncover the opinions and beliefs of a trainee, such as *'What did you like about the lesson?'*, *'What would you do differently?'*, *'How well do you think the learners understood the task?'*, etc.

A dialogic approach to giving feedback thus gives the opportunity for trainees to reflect on their practice. Moreover, it encourages trainees to participate in the talk. This, in turn, ensures that knowledge is co-constructed and developed by both the trainee and the trainer/mentor (Copland, Ma and Mann, 2009: 19).

**"The type of model that the trainer adopts will impact the discourse (dialogic/authoritative) that they use."**

### Models of supervision/observation and discourse

There are a wide variety of models that teacher educators can use when observing teacher trainees (Gebhard, 1984). The type of model that the trainer adopts will impact the discourse (dialogic/authoritative) that they use. Most teachers are familiar with and envisage traditional models of observation, such as the supervisory approach (Freeman, 1982: 22) and the appraisal model (Cosh, 1999: 23), in which the observer plays a directive role. Trainers using such models are likely to use authoritative discourse, as, in these models they take on an evaluative and judgmental position. They are responsible for commenting on the teaching ability of the trainee and are positioned as the 'expert' (Freeman, 1982: 22; Cosh 1999: 23). There is a hierarchical relationship between the trainer and trainee and this will be evident in their discourse. Trainers will take longer turns of talk, control the topics of the conversation and dominate, while trainees play a passive role. Unless explicitly asked to do so, trainees are likely to avoid expressing their ideas or opinions. Moreover, because of the directness of trainers' comments, trainees may feel threatened, uncomfortable and frustrated during the feedback event when supervised under these models (Gebhard, 1984).

Other models, which are less well-known, such as the alternatives approach (Freeman, 1982: 27) and reflective model (Cosh, 1999: 25), are collaborative and aim to serve the purpose of teacher development. Talk in the feedback event of those adopting these models is much more dialogic. Instead of the trainer focusing on what the trainee did, or perhaps did not do, the trainer asks the trainee to give their opinion about how the lesson went. Arguably, there is still a hierarchical relationship between the trainer and trainee because one has more experience and knowledge. However, because the trainees' opinions and views are welcomed, they are less likely to feel threatened and will be more comfortable playing an active role in the discussion.



As such, rather than the conversation being dominated by the trainer, the talk is more co-operative. The trainer will encourage trainees to reflect on their practice and explore alternatives and new ideas, which, in turn, positions the trainee as the one responsible for developing their practice and illustrates that they can rely on themselves to make teaching decisions (Gebhard, 1984).

## Why take a dialogic approach?

While it is recognised that both approaches have their benefits, the authoritative approach limits the possibility for trainees to share their personal views (Louw, Watson and Jimarkon, 2014). Furthermore, it fosters an environment in which trainees learn to rely on supervisors and experts for advice and consequently can hinder their progress in becoming autonomous teachers, who assume responsibilities for their own teaching (Gebhard, 1984). Therefore, I, like many other teachers who advocate collaborative reflection in teaching training, support a dialogic approach (Brandt, 2008; Copland, Ma and Mann, 2009; Chick, 2015). We argue that a dialogic approach promotes reflection and thus can better prepare trainees for their futures. As recognised by Mann (2002: 106) 'reflective teachers are better able to monitor, make real-time decisions and respond to the changing needs of learners than less reflective teachers. Furthermore, trainers using a dialogic approach have the potential to align practice with the sociocultural theories dominating current pedagogy. From a social constructivist perspective, teacher training and development should be a social process. Trainees should be given opportunities for 'dialogic engagement and strategic mediation', as this creates new opportunities for learning and has the potential to lead to new knowledge construction (Johnson, 2009: 20), which in the training environment is essential.

**"Although trainers/mentors may intend to adopt a dialogic approach during feedback it cannot be assumed that this is what happens in reality."**

## How can a dialogic approach be realised?

Although trainers/mentors may intend to adopt a dialogic approach during feedback it cannot be assumed that this is what happens in reality. Most trainers/mentors, like myself, have more experience (as both observer and observed) with the traditional supervisory/appraisal models of observation and consequently assume an authoritative role in the feedback event. Moreover, as Louw, Watson and Jimarkon (2014: 748) discovered, there are often contradictions between teacher beliefs and their practice. In order to determine whether I was realising a dialogic approach in my practice I examined data from a mentoring scheme I engaged in earlier this year. As an experienced teacher, I was paired with two novice teachers. As part of the scheme, the two teachers taught a lesson and then identified areas of their practice they would like to improve/develop for their next practicum.

As their mentor, I was responsible for helping them to plan their lesson, observing their practice and providing feedback. I gathered audio data from the post lesson feedback sessions that we engaged in, transcribed the talk from these meetings and then applied conversation analysis to four short extracts. I conducted a line-by-line qualitative analysis on these four extracts, paying close attention to the types of questions and statements I used, the responses from the mentees, floor control and pauses (see Webb 2018). These aspects were chosen as they have been identified in the literatures as features of dialogic talk (see Chick, 2015; Copland, Ma and Mann, 2009). This investigation raised my awareness of dialogic features of talk. In the following section, these six features will be outlined as tips that trainers and mentors alike can use as a model for realising a dialogic approach.

## Six tips for realising a dialogic approach in feedback

### 1 Use authentic questions

If I ask a trainee '*What should you do while students are reading?*' I am hoping that they will respond with the answer '*monitor/walk around the room*'. This type of question is thus not authentic because I asked it with a prescribed answer in mind. Authentic questions are those that are open-ended and do not have a clear 'right' or 'wrong' answer. For example, '*How did that differ from what you did before? Why do you think the learners did not understand? What do you think went well?*' There is no right or wrong answer to these questions and I have found that they often encourage discussion. This leads trainees to move beyond 'what' to 'why' and can sustain interaction, which can help them to advance their understandings.

### 2 Follow up

By following up with a response that is linked to a trainee contribution, trainers/mentors can show that they are listening to trainees and that their views are not only being 'heard', but also 'valued'. For example, if a trainee talks about an aspect of the lesson that they thought went well, ask them, '*why they thought this went well, how it made them feel, what this means for future lessons, etc*'. This may seem rather simplistic but listening and responding appropriately to trainees opens up the dialogic space, encouraging them to share their own ideas and beliefs, which, in turn, creates a more collaborative environment.

### 3 Mirror back a version of what has been said

The training period can be a very stressful experience for trainees are not only expected to absorb new knowledge but also put it into practice. Perhaps unsurprisingly, then, their justification for doing certain things can, at times, be inchoate. By repeating a version of what the trainee has said or asking them to clarify or expand on their beliefs and opinions (for example, '*Did you mean...?*' '*Could you explain what you mean by...?*' etc), trainers/mentors can encourage trainees to articulate (or rearticulate) their emerging understandings (see Mann, 2002, for a full description of this technique).

continued >>>

#### 4 Give control

Rather than a trainer beginning the session by detailing what they thought of the lesson, trainees can be given the opportunity to set the agenda and nominate a topic for discussion or express what they thought went well/not so well. Trainers can facilitate this by asking questions such as, 'What aspect of the lesson would you like to discuss?' 'What do you think went well in the lesson?' 'What would you change if you do the lesson again?' This gives control to the trainees, which increases their sense of agency and opens up a possible dialogic space for them to examine their own ideas about teaching.

#### 5 Give time/ space

There are times when the opinion of the trainer/mentor may differ from that of the trainee. Instead of taking an authoritative approach and telling the trainee the 'best' approach or the 'right' answer, trainers/mentors can indicate that their opinion differs by saying something along the lines of 'I did not think of it like that' or 'is there any other way you can think of doing/achieving that?' This gives time/space for the trainee to explore alternatives and discover the answer for themselves, which can make what they learn more memorable.

#### 6 Redistribute the power

The roles that trainers and trainees assume are hierarchical by nature. This has a big impact on the discourse they share. One way to redistribute the balance of power and make it more equitable is to find ways for the trainer and trainee to swap roles. For me, this was achieved by assuming the role of learner teacher and having the trainee observe and give feedback on a lesson I taught.

### Conclusion

The six tips above, for realising a dialogic approach, are the result of an investigation of my own practice. They can be used by trainers/mentors wishing to adopt a dialogic approach. While some tips encourage trainees to reflect on and externalise their current understandings of good teaching practice, others enable trainers/mentors to scaffold learning and thus 'concomitantly bridge the theory-practice gap that educators have long grappled with' (Chick, 2015: 300). It is understood that for some, adopting a dialogic approach during feedback may mean changing the role they are most familiar with and, in turn, the way they usually deliver feedback. However, as detailed above, adopting such an approach can foster novice teachers' reflective skills and enable feedback to become an opportunity in which knowledge is co-constructed through collective, supportive and purposeful talk (Copland and Mann, 2010: 188).

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Here are some recent additions to our subscription community of teacher trainers, mentors and teacher educators:

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# News in our Field

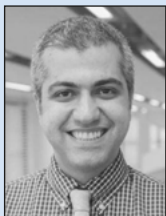
By Amin Neghavati, Singapore

## Hello Teacher Educators,

Since global discussions about the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML) in education and language teaching have been getting really fascinating lately, I've decided to cover some recent updates in this field in this issue's 'News in Our Field' Column.

I hope you find this a good starting point for your future exploration of emerging technologies in the field of teacher education.

As always, if you would like to send me something for my column in the next issue, get in touch with me on Twitter @neghavati or simply drop me an email at neghavati@gmail.com. You can also add #TTTjournal to your posts on social media if you would like to get in touch.



## Artificial Intelligence and Education

### Example One

Artificial Intelligence is nothing new, not even in the field of education. A recent algorithm based on deep learning developed by Stanford University and Google, analyses students' performance and creates a picture of their knowledge. Application of this system in assessment means a student's entire learning can be assessed as and when it happens, making traditional assessment tools redundant. Just imagine, we teacher trainers wouldn't have to fill in any observation or feedback forms during CELTA courses because this would be automatically done by an AI system. What would be the benefits? We could spend the time we save on more important issues using our unique human skills.

### Example Two

Here's another example. 'Jill Watson' is the name given to the AI Assistant Professor or Teaching Assistant built on IBM's Watson platform by Prof Ashok Goel's workshop. Jill is the world's first artificially intelligent TA, and "she" spends her days helping students in the online M.Sc. in Computer Science (OMS CS) programme's Knowledge-Based Artificial Intelligence (KBAI) course. Soon Jill will be able to answer about 40 percent of the 10,000 questions students ask each semester. And she doesn't even need coffee breaks.

The AI within Watson uses natural language processes to analyse structures and extract meaning. This is beyond simple key word recognition in a text (i.e. It understands the message and can read between the lines as well). Students in the course in 2016, when Jill was first used, didn't know that 'she' wasn't human and most of them didn't even notice. In fact, they found Jill quite helpful and smart in supporting them and answering their questions on the discussion board. Application of systems like this could shape the future of education.

For those of us who monitor discussion boards on online Delta Module 1 preparation courses, for instance, systems like Jill Watson could save a lot of time.

The main objective of these AI systems is to help teachers and trainers save time for more important things or to support them with tasks they can't handle on their own, (tasks such as dealing with more than 1,000 questions and a lot more comments posted by around 400 students over a university term, in Jill Watson's case.) And there is no doubt that we are still far from having a fully functioning AI teacher or teacher trainer with human abilities. Creativity and social abilities are still relevant and will remain relevant in the future but machine strengths, like speed, accuracy, prediction and scalability, are what the human brain can't handle with precision at scale. The idea of using technology to more accurately complete the repetitive tasks we have to do on a daily basis is very attractive.

### Example Three

An even more relevant example is Liulishuo, a Chinese AI language learning firm founded in 2013 ([www.liulishuo.com](http://www.liulishuo.com)). The company has released an app with an IELTS speaking test simulator with virtual AI teachers that give very accurate test reports to its Chinese students. They have reached more than 120 million registered users globally and provide each of them with their own personalised English lessons. The future is already here and we should make sure teachers we train are familiar with the technologies that their own students use.

### Example Four

Another interesting example is EDIA ([www.edia.nl/](http://www.edia.nl/)), an Amsterdam-based education technology firm founded in 2004. EDIA's AI can now automatically classify any text on the CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference) at 90% accuracy. It is not just for English! It works for German, Dutch, French, Spanish and Italian as well. EDIA's Papyrus indicates which words are over your target level and gives you an instant readability level. Isn't this a perfect tool for vocabulary lessons and material development? How would future versions of tools like this change our understanding of vocabulary and how it should be taught?

### Example Five

More recently, a university based in New York has been collaborating with IBM and is offering its students who are studying Chinese a 360-degree virtual environment that teleports them to the busy streets of Beijing where they can order food or haggle with virtual street vendors. They are working hard to find the best way to make language learning work for everyone. How are these technologies changing the world of language teaching? Is language learning moving away from its conventional form and style to a more on-demand skills-based one?

continued >>>

### Example Six

An education technology firm called 360Ed ([www.360ed.org/](http://www.360ed.org/)), founded in 2016, has recently been using emerging technologies to reform teacher training. Using virtual reality, teachers from all over the world can observe the classrooms of high-quality teachers in order to learn from them or even receive mentoring from a distance. This is a massive step towards affordable high-quality public education in the world.

### Human + Machine hybrids

It is important to understand that machines and current models of AI are not going to replace us any time soon (They will, however, replace us at some point in the future.). Daugherty and Wilson, in their 2018 book "Human + Machine" published by Harvard Business Review Press, call what is happening now the "missing middle" where either "humans complement machines" or "AI gives humans extra power". These hybrids can make learning, teaching and training more engaging and personalised experiences than they are now.

What do you think you would spend your time and mental space on, as a teacher educator, if most of those tasks that you don't necessarily enjoy doing today were done by machines?

### We are still needed!

However, there are a few issues when it comes to automating processes using Artificial Intelligence because there are certain things that AI can't yet do. Creativity is one of those areas that AI can't handle. Human creativity and creative achievements are socially embedded and are out of reach to current AI technology. Limiting creativity and creative thinking to the existing AI algorithms is, as Sean Dorrance Kelly says in an article in MIT Technology Review in April 2019, "misunderstanding both what human beings are and what our creativity amounts to".

Creativity is a fundamental part of being human and creating opportunities to practise creativity in language learning is something teachers should be familiar with. How much time do we spend on the area of creativity in our teacher training courses?

The risks of offloading processes to AI without analysing the side-effects can be quite high. If you are a decision maker and are planning to introduce a new technology where you work, it is necessary to consider perspectives that are easy to miss such as:

- Is our new AI-enabled process compliant with local data regulations?
- Where does the data set come from and where will the collected data sit in the future?
- What might some of the new system's possible unintended consequences be on people who are going to be directly affected by it?
- Does the AI design and algorithm carry diversity and inclusion at its core? Have the developers received relevant diversity and inclusion training?

### And finally...

The possibilities that emerging technologies like AR (Augmented Reality), VR (Virtual Reality), AV (Augmented Virtuality), MR (Mixed Reality) and AI (Artificial Intelligence) are bringing to the field of language teaching are endless. The blend of smart virtual content with the real world is definitely going to massively disrupt the world of language learning. What do you think the key skills will be for a teacher educator when these AI machines have become normal in our field? What are your main concerns about this future? What will you be happy about? Share your thoughts with us on social media.

## The 'Monkey Management' concept and ELT teacher training

By Jaber Kamali, Iran

### Introduction

Learner-centeredness has attracted considerable attention from researchers in the English Language Teaching (henceforth ELT) world since the advent of *constructivist learning theory* in which the learner's critical role in constructing meaning from new information and prior experience is emphasized. However, effective "monkey management" (Waters, 1998) as a tool for achieving greater learner-centeredness has not attracted as much attention as it deserves.

### What is Monkey Management?

Monkey management, a term borrowed from business management literature, is defined as the correct assignment of responsibility for the next step in a problem-solving process (Blanchard et al. 1990). The 'monkey' is the 'next move' in a problem-solving process and refers to both *what* needs to be done and *who* should do what needs to be done.

Waters was the first to suggest implementing this concept in ELT classrooms (Waters, 1998). He indicated that, to run a learner-centered class, we need to manage the monkeys, in an effective way. When we teachers more often assign students the responsibility of solving their own problems; we, in effect, save time for other things we should do.



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### Monkey Management

"The more you get rid of your people's monkeys, the more time you have for your people" (Blanchard et al. 1990, p. 55).

Blanchard et al. (op cit) categorized three types of monkeys: *sideward-leaping monkeys*, *downward-leaping monkeys*, and *upward-leaping monkeys*.

*Sideward-leaping monkeys* refer to times when a problem is passed to a peer to solve; so, in language classrooms, these monkeys leap from one learner to another. Learners who are late or demotivated throw up examples of this type of monkey. The second type, *downward-leaping monkeys*, are when the responsibility for solving a problem is passed by people of a higher rank such as teachers to those of lower rank such as students. An example might be a teacher asking a lower level learner to correct the paper of a higher level learner, or making a learner present something s/he does not have any idea about. (This last being done to avoid responsibility, not as a practice of learner-centeredness). The third type of monkey, the *upward-leaping monkey* is when a problem is offered by lower rank people, i.e. learners in our case, to upper rank ones, teachers. Imagine a learner asks the teacher about the meaning of a word that s/he does not know. The teacher, instead of asking the learner to note cognates, prefixes or times when the word has already been met in class, immediately starts defining the word and giving examples. The monkey has been successfully thrown from the learner around the neck of the teacher. Waters argues that, if the teacher often assumes responsibility for the monkey, s/he is working too hard and also denies the student the chance to learn how to solve their own problems.

### Why do some teachers work too hard?

Waters (1998) classified the reasons for teachers picking up learners' monkeys in the ELT classroom into two broad categories, "external pressures" and "internal drives" (p.14). External pressures include shortage of time, examination pressures, materials constraints, the head of department/headmaster/inspector threat, cultural expectations, and learner resistance. Internal drives comprise lack of appropriate training, the Peter Principle, 'fear of flying' and a teacher needing to feel wanted.

The Peter Principle is when people are promoted past their level of competence up to the level of their incompetence (Peter, 1969). In ELT, a good learner who takes the risk of trying to answer the teacher's questions, may continue to do the same thing after they become a teacher, answering all the learners' questions.

Fear of flying is when people have difficulty delegating to others because of the risks involved. They think if they do a task themselves, the quality can be better assured. In the world of ELT, teachers may avoid letting the learners solve their own problems because they think the learners can be misled or misguided; therefore, mislearn.

### Three rules to help teachers

Having explained what monkey management is and why teachers often take the responsibility of solving problems away from learners, Waters (1998) offers three monkey management 'rules': describe the monkey, assign the monkey, and insure the monkey.

Rule 1, involves identifying the monkey. "When a learner brings a problem to a teacher, the teacher's first step should be to clarify what needs to be done next in order to begin to solve the problem" (Waters, op cit p. 16).

Rule 2 deals with the person who is responsible for solving the problem. Its principle asserts that "all monkeys must be handled at the lowest organisational level consistent with their welfare" (Blanchard op cit, p. 67).

Rule 3 considers one of the drawbacks of learner-centered classes i.e. making mistakes. "Safeguards therefore need to be built into the process to ensure that the consequent risks are kept to an acceptable level" (Waters, op cit, p. 17). Hence, two insurance policies should be practiced. First, "Recommend, Then Act" in which the learners are asked to come up with their own plan of action which they then recommend to the teacher. After discussion and, if necessary, appropriate modification, the teacher then allows learners to act. The second policy is "Act, Then Advise" which provides more freedom for learners when the teacher is confident the learners can be more independent, and therefore be supervised more loosely.

Blanchard points out a fourth rule which is "check on the monkey" (Blanchard, op cit p. 94), I deeply opine that this rule can be as important as the other ones. For example, when a teacher corrects learners' writing with the help of correction codes and then gives it back to them to correct the writing by themselves, the job is not done yet. The meeting the teacher and learners have to check the corrected writing piece is the last move which can make the process complete.

### The planning of a workshop for teachers

Thinking that the idea of monkey management could be helpful for teachers, I decided to plan a workshop on "Effective monkey management in the ELT classroom". It was designed for 30 in-service teachers who had been teaching for 5 to 10 years in different language schools in Iran. The teachers were all between 25 to 45 years old.

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A possible session plan is below:

**Session title:** Monkey management

**Level of participants:** In-service teachers

**Time:** 90 minutes

**Session aim(s)**

- To outline the 'monkey management' concept;
- To illustrate the typical behavior of the 'monkey' in ELT;
- To indicate some of the problems it can cause in the classroom;
- To delineate the reasons of these problems;
- To discuss several strategies for coping successfully with ELT classroom monkeys.

**Steps:**

Step 1: A definition of 'monkey management' is given (see above) and an example of a monkey in ELT is offered. E.g.,

**Scenario 1**

*L: Excuse me, what does assignment mean here?!*

*T: Assignment? It means homework. Means something you as a student are asked to do. Ok?*

*L: Ok, thanks.*

Step 2: Trainer gives the following scrambled words and phrases to trainees and they unjumble them to gain four possible effects of picking up learners' monkeys, as was done in the scenario above.

*Violation / of / Failure / own / learning / autonomous / self-confidence / Students / give / develop / us more / of / Neglect / of / teacher's / mega-monkey / it / problems to solve*

*NOTE: the first words are capitalized*

(Answer key:

Failure to develop autonomous learning

Violation of self-confidence

Students give us more problems to solve

Neglect of teacher's own mega-monkey)

S-S / 7-10 minutes.

Step 3: Feedback is provided for the activity in Step 2. T-CL / 5-8 minutes.

Step 4: Group discussion of possible reasons for picking up learners' monkeys based on which a poster is designed. S-S / 25-30 minutes.

Step 5: Presentation / A representative from each group presents his/her group poster in front of the class and the trainer and other trainees ask their questions / S-S / 25-30 minutes.

Step 6: Discussion of the three rules for more effective monkey management. (See above) T-S and S-S / 10 minutes.

Step 7: Application. Trainees discuss the worksheet below. S-S / 10 minutes

*Worksheet: Answer the questions below with reference to the two scenarios.*

*What is the monkey?*

*Where is the monkey at first?*

*Where is it at the end?*

*How are the three rules applied?*

**Scenario 1**

*1. L: Excuse me, what does assignment mean here?!*

*2. T: Assignment? It means homework. Means something you as a student are asked to do. Ok?*

*3. L: Ok, thanks.*

**Scenario 2**

*4. L1: Excuse me, what does assignment mean?*

*5. T: Assignment? Ok. Can you remember last session I told you to bring a piece of writing for today?*

*6. L: Yes.*

*7. T: What did I say you should bring? (3 second silence)*

*8. L: Assignment*

*9. T: Great, so what does assignment mean?*

*10. L: Something we should do at home like homework.*

*11. T: very good. Can you give an example?*

*12. L1: Every session you give us assignments (everybody laughs)*

*13. T: Yes, I do. (he laughs, too)*

Step 8 Reflection: The trainees discuss the answers to the questions in Step 7. Comments may include:

In the first scenario, the monkey is on the learner's shoulder at first but by the end it is on the teacher's shoulder since she accepted and took responsibility for the problem. However, in the second scenario, the monkey is on the learner's shoulder at first and stays there till the end of the scenario. Although by saying, "Excuse me, what does assignment mean?" the learner intends to throw the monkey to the teacher, the teacher gives it back to the learner. Regarding the question of how the 3 rules are applied, although in the first scenario, the rules are not applied, in the second, rule 1, describing the monkey, occurs in turn 5 and rule 2, assigning the monkey, occurs in turn 9, and rule 3, insuring the monkey, occurs in turn 11.

Step 8 As an individual activity, trainees complete two sentences about the session. The sentences are "The concept of monkey management can guide me through ....." and "The penny dropped when ....." / S / 10-15 minutes.

Step 9: Aims revisited / Reviewing the aims is the last activity / T-CL / 3-5 minutes.

## New ideas

Different parts of this workshop could add some points to the ideas mentioned by Waters in his thought-provoking article. The points mentioned by experienced teachers in workshops I have run are as follows:

- 1 The trainees may conclude that the idea is not only helpful in management, training, and teaching but in different aspects of life, such as parenthood.
- 2 The trainees may give different instances of monkey in their classes which they could not manage well like when a learner asks them to read a text for them or when they are asked to do less pair work in the class.
- 3 In the "effects of picking up learners' monkeys" part, the trainees added four other effects to what Waters claimed, namely a) having less time for the learners, b) teacher burnout, c) being an indispensable teacher, and d) ripple effect.
  - a **Having less time for the learners.** The teachers complained that it seems the more we get rid of our learners' monkeys, the more time we have for our learners. This means that by letting the learners solve their problems, we have more time to deal with their psychological needs, wants, and rights.
  - b **Teacher burnout.** Teachers often complain that the harder they work, the further behind they get and the worse the performance of their learners become. This means more effort leads to less result which can serve as a serious problem in ELT i.e. teacher burn-out (Maslach, 1993).
  - c **Being an indispensable teacher.** Indispensable teachers are the ones who do interrupting, latching, and echoing (Walsh, 2011). This type of teacher can be harmful, not valuable, especially when they impede the work of learners.
  - d **Ripple effect.** The monkeys can *ricochet* (Blanchard, et al. 1990) since the learners' demotivation, attitude, and other negative psychological feelings and behavior can have a widespread effect and cause problems for the other people in the class. This effect in classroom management is called the ripple effect (Kounin, 1970).

Trainees could add some points for "reasons for picking up learners' monkeys". Although the broad categories of internal drives and external pressures remained unchanged, their components were expanded. The components which were added to internal drives were *teacher authority, regaining confidence, high TTT, sense of responsibility, and sense of achievement*. Some components were added to external pressures as *not making learners feel ashamed, mixed ability classes, and learners' competency*.

## Conclusion

This article was an attempt to elaborate on Waters' adaptation of the monkey management concept to ELT and to support its value for encouraging a more learner-centered approach in ELT classrooms. It also reported on a workshop run on this fairly new topic which aimed to promote the idea among language teachers.

The newly added factors to Waters' article is an acknowledgment of the practicality of monkey management itself. It shows the power of learner-centered classes in which the voice of the learners is taken into account. It proved that making the learner – the trainees, in the workshop – responsible for their own learning can add to the richness of context i.e. Waters' research on monkey management. It can also free us, as teacher trainers, from *delusions of adequacy* (Blanchard et al. 1990) by which we think we are the best to provide the input and solve all the trainees' problems.

I hope readers may be stimulated to revisit the original article by Waters, to run workshops on this for the teachers they work with, and also to become adept at assigning responsibility for the monkeys in the ELT teacher training class to the teachers in the classes.

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# Been teaching and training for a long time?

By Tessa Woodward, The Editor, UK

## Introduction

When I came back to work in the UK in the mid-1980s there was a lot of talk in the teacher training community of 'Teacher Resistance.' As far as I could tell, this was used to mean teachers being unwilling to do what bossy old teacher trainers and course developers wanted them to do. So, I have always been a bit allergic to the phrase. Unless the word 'resistance' is being used as in 'The French Resistance', an underground guerrilla action against orthodoxy. In which case, I could probably have more sympathy with it!

Why my allergy? Well, a person who has been teaching and teacher training for over twenty years has very different needs from a beginner teacher. The experienced teacher or trainer (Is that you, dear reader? Or do you perhaps work with such a person?) may well want to keep on learning. But if, for example, I am invited to attend a professional development workshop on, say, 'Improving my board work' (and goodness knows it needs it), or on using songs in class, (sigh) or exploiting texts with pre-intermediate learners (yawn)... well, I might possibly baulk a bit. I might get labelled as a 'resister'! Not that these workshop topics aren't important. But I might feel that I do know a little bit about them already and that other topics would appeal to me more.

In this article then, I will hunt out and hint at three other issues that might speak more directly to a very experienced teacher or trainer.

**"The age gap is real. It's nobody's fault but it needs to be acknowledged."**

## Issue One: The age gap

It's not that we experienced folk are getting older. No, not at all. It's that the language learners and pre-service teacher trainees that we work with keep getting relentlessly younger! The age gap is real. It's nobody's fault but it needs to be acknowledged. There are, however, ways of looking across the age gap and trying to understand the view of the people on the other side.

Beloit College in Wisconsin, USA has a nifty idea for doing this. Each year they make a 'Mindset list'. For example, the students who arrive at the college aged 18 in 2019 were born in 1997 (which feels like yesterday to me). A person who was born in 1997 probably:

- has never licked a postage stamp
- thinks that 'Formal communication' means an email
- knows that 'having a chat' rarely involves actual talking

And, if you say to an 18-year-old that something happened 'around the turn of the century', they are apt to ask you, 'Which one?' And a tablet, to them, is not something you take in the morning.



PB

*...has never licked a postage stamp*

Compiling a mindset list like this, about our young students, can help us to tune into their world experience.

Coming back to the classroom, we can try out the following activity.

### Task

- Write down three things your students/trainees do in class that you would never do.
- Write down three things you as an older teacher/teacher trainer do in class that your students/trainees would never do.

My own examples here are that my students will often take a photo of my board work, with the cameras built into their tablets or phones, whereas I would tend to copy notes down in handwriting on paper.

And I tend to look an unfamiliar word up in a real book, a dictionary, whereas the trainees and language students in my classes prefer to use electronic dictionaries or e-translators.

If we make 'Mindset' lists or 'What I do/they do' lists and keep them handy, we can remind ourselves that us older professionals we may look just as weird to our young participants as they sometimes do to us.

## Issue Two: Career memories

Over a long career, it is likely that we have changed the way we work quite significantly. We can cast our minds back and remember the materials, activities, beliefs, and habits we had and employed early on, comparing them to the way we work now. We can try out the following activity.



## Task

Fill in the gaps in the sentence starters below.

- I used to .....and I still do.
- I used to..... but I don't any more.
- I didn't use to..... but now I do.

To get you started, here are a few true sentences of my own.

*I used to use a short warm-up activity at the start of sessions and I still do.*

*I used to be a bit sniffy about using translation in class but I'm not any more. I used to stand up all the time while teaching because that is the way I was trained but I sometimes sit down now.*

*I didn't use to insist on a short writing phase in every class but now I do.*

Once you have some sentences filled in, you could share them with a colleague and consider together the question, 'Why did it make sense to you to continue/stop/start?'

What we are arriving at here is our sense of plausibility. (Prabhu 1989). In other words, what habits, materials, beliefs and materials seem to us, as experienced teachers, to be likely to lead to student learning? What seems plausible to us now?

## Issue Three: Talking shop

I use the phrase, 'talking shop', in the way described by Clark, 2001. We teachers can create a feeling of community by talking to our colleagues about our work experiences in a 'light-hearted but heartfelt' way. Clark suggests that groups of about ten people who know each other, meet regularly, say, once a month, and choose meaningful topics for discussion. Participants prepare anecdotes to contribute to the topic, ready for the meeting. Clark also suggests that groups decide on some conversational ground rules before they get stuck in to the talk. The following possible ground rules might be discussed for starters.

Possible conversational ground rules:

- No interrupting
- No unsolicited advice-giving
- It's voluntary (You can say, 'Pass!')
- It's confidential

We know that good conversation can be invited but never commanded. But starting with a light-hearted topic such as 'a comical experience I had at work', together with the ground rules above, with the group continuing to meet to talk about other topics, in a longer-term conversation....this may well lead to personal and co-operative sense-making. Towards the end of a 'Talking Shop' session participants can revisit the ground rules they earlier devised, checking whether they have stuck to them and whether the ground rules need adjusting. It is useful too to add a stage where we consider what we have learned from our own and other people's anecdotes.

## End note

Very experienced teachers and teacher trainers, usually do want to keep developing professionally, do want to keep learning but may wish to do this in a different way than by attending the usual sort of in-service training session. We may want to dwell on different topics from those that interest a starter teacher. For example, we may want to consider the age gap between us and our participants. We may find it useful to think back over our long careers and consider what is plausible to us now in terms of teaching that leads to learning. Or we might want to develop interesting conversations over time on light-hearted but heartfelt topics.

## Reading Leads

Maley A and N S Prabhu (1989) Interview in *The Teacher Trainer* 3/3 pp 28-30 Pilgrims

Clark C (2001) *Talking Shop* Teachers College Press

Woodward T, Graves K and D Freeman *Teacher Development Over Time* (2018) Routledge

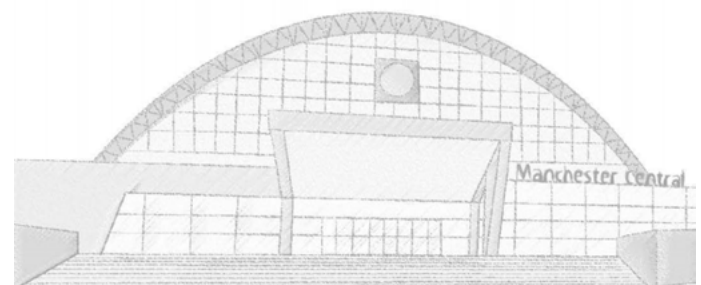
This article started life as a workshop at the IATEFL conference in Liverpool in April 2019. Thanks to the people who said, 'Are you going to write it up?'



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The

# Teacher Trainer

## Sending in?

Would you like to send something in to *The Teacher Trainer*?

If you have an idea that is useful, relevant and interesting to teacher trainers, teacher educators and teacher mentors, why not write it up for us? If you are not familiar with our content or style, read an issue or three of the journal and also go on our web site to read examples of articles that have appeared in our pages.

### Our readers

Our subscribers and readers are all over the world. Some have English as their first language. Many do not. They may be trainers of pre-service or in-service teachers and they work in many different settings. This is why a clear structure and clear language are very important in a first draft article. We are not overly academic. Even thoughtful pieces will keep the number of bibliographical references to under ten. And these pieces will contain a section on how the thoughts can be implemented or made to come alive to readers in their own settings

### Timing

*The Teacher Trainer* comes out three times a year, but for contributors there are no deadlines as such so there is no need to worry about timing. Articles are printed once they are ready and after they have queued up for a while. There are no special issues, but there are specialised series running in most issues. Examples of these are "News in Our Field", "Practical Training Session", "Observation and Feedback" and 'Interview'.

### First draft

So, if you would like to send us an article, please write in an accessible, non-academic style. Length should normally be 800-4,000 words. Send your first draft in double spaced with broad margins. Use headings and sub-headings throughout to make your text easier to follow. Please give a brief bio data and an accurate word count at the end. Make sure your name and contact details appear in both your article and your accompanying email in case the two get separated. Don't send your article to other publications at the same time as you are sending it to us as we will then not consider it.

Your article will be acknowledged by pro-forma email. It is normal for contributors to receive editorial comments later on so please do not take this as a sign of failure! Edits are often necessary to ensure your text is clear, a good length and makes sense to readers in very different settings round the world.

### Turning down

We do sometimes turn articles down. This is usually for one of the following reasons:

- The article is for language students or language teachers not for our readership of teacher trainers, teacher educators and teacher mentors.
- The article is too similar to one already published or about to be published in the journal.
- The article (or a part of it) has already been published elsewhere.
- The article is too long for our few pages.
- The article is very academic in style.
- The article contains nothing new.

But wherever possible the editor will work with you to get your ideas in print. She is part-time so there may be delays when she is teaching or training and thus not working on articles for a few weeks.

Once accepted, we try to publish your article in about four issues, but if it is an awkward length, or we have space constraints, it may be in the queue longer.

### Short articles!

When we are laying out a new issue of the *Teacher Trainer* journal, we often have a little space left over. We keep that for extra adverts that come in late. These little spaces are also perfect for short articles! So, if you have a really good idea that you want to share with fellow professionals, and it is very short (under 1,000 words), send it in! It may well help us with our layout. It may also mean that your work gets printed quicker than usual too!

### Copyright

Before your article is published in the *Teacher Trainer* journal or on the journal web site, we will ask that you formally assign copyright to The Education and Training Company Limited, which owns *The Teacher Trainer Journal*.

The Company's owning the copyright means that you must ask us for permission to reprint any part of your article elsewhere. Requests for permission should be sent to The Editor of *The Teacher Trainer Journal*. We will usually grant permission for authors to use material from published articles in talk handouts and elsewhere provided that a line is included prominently on each page saying that the article was first published in *The Teacher Trainer* journal and giving the volume and issue numbers, date and page numbers of publication.

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You will receive a complimentary copy of the issue in which your article appears. We will contact you shortly before publication to ask for your best postal address. Please keep us informed therefore of any address/email changes while you wait to hear from us about the publication date.

**Tessa Woodward**  
Editor, *The Teacher Trainer*  
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www.tttjournal.co.uk

# The Community of Practice for Teacher Educators: Year in Review 2018-2019

By Maggie Milne, Ellen Darling, Kirsteen Donaghy, Sirin Soyoz, British Council

## A look back at our first year

Following a successful pilot, we launched our Community of Practice on 27 June, 2018. Research by the European Commission into the roles, qualities and professional development of teacher educators, had highlighted a lack of clarity on teacher educator roles and identities; a lack of shared understanding about the skills, knowledge and understanding required for the role; and limited opportunities to engage in continuing professional development.

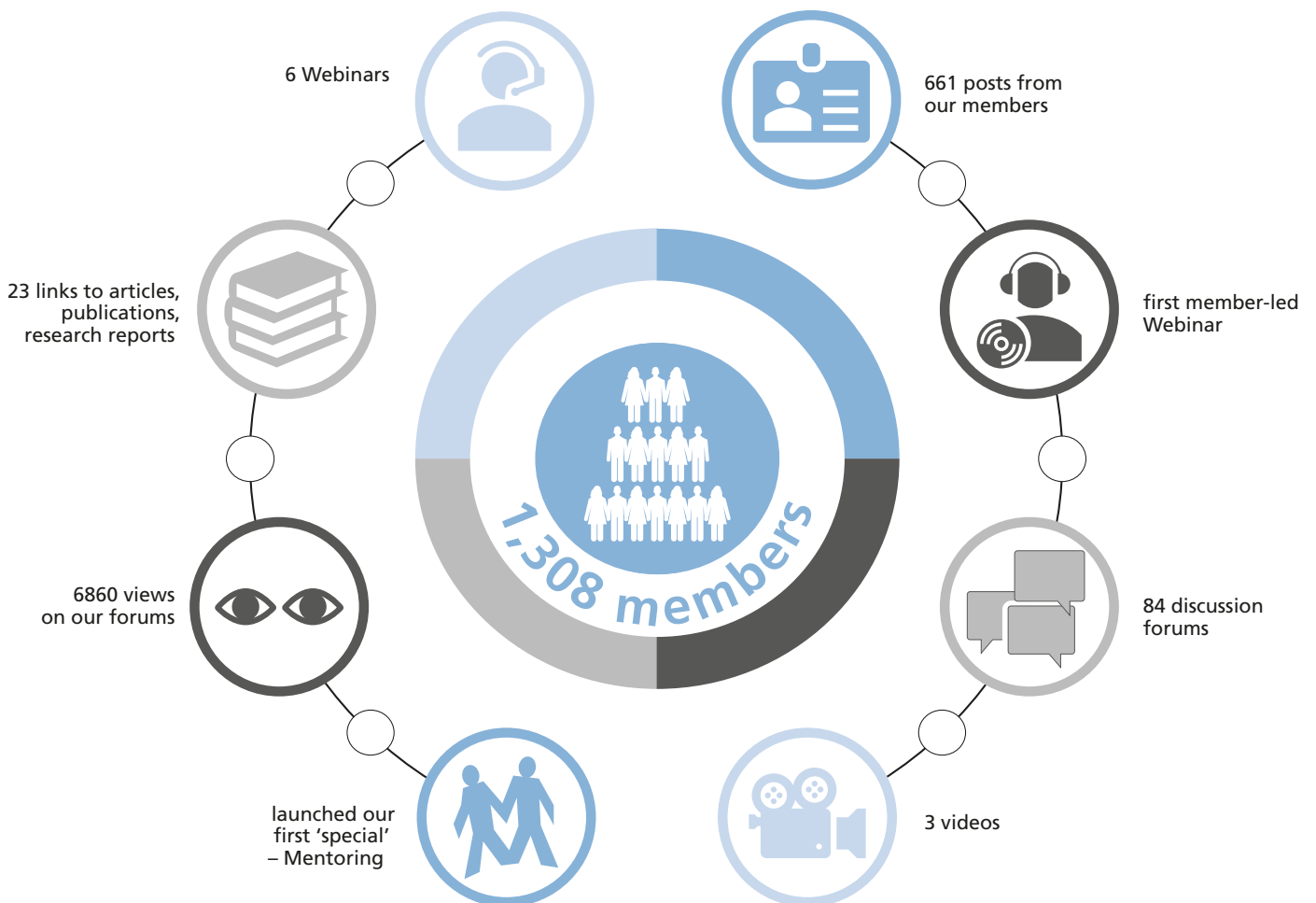
Our online community addresses these challenges by providing a space for teacher educators to connect with each other, share knowledge and ideas, engage in topical discussions, find out about events relevant to the profession and engage with professional development opportunities.

*“The community underpins the British Council’s commitment to the continuing professional development of teacher educators.”*



*Supporting Teacher Educators Everywhere*  
<https://teacher-educators.english.britishcouncil.org>

## Our year in numbers



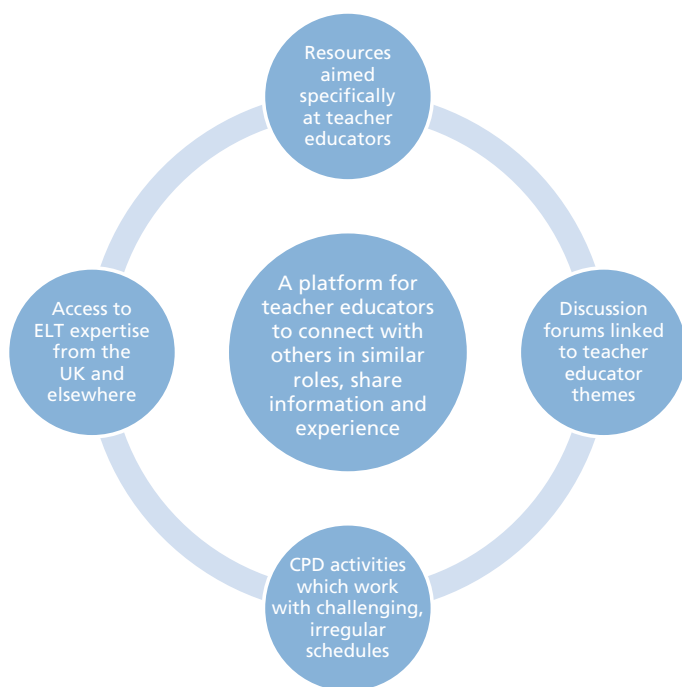
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And statistics from Google analytics show that members in India, Egypt and the UK are consistently in the top three for most frequent access to the community, followed by members in Ukraine, Nigeria, Italy, Spain, Turkey, Mexico and Russia.

We are a truly international community, providing access to CPD without borders with members in every continent.

## Our goals

Our overarching goal is to provide continuing professional development opportunities for teacher educators all over the world.



## Meeting our goals

Teacher educators are often quite isolated in their working environments with a corresponding lack of developmental opportunities which come through interacting with peers. Our community of Practice has addressed this challenge by enabling Teacher Educators to connect with others in similar roles. In this way, as Wenger (2007) says: *"they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly."*<sup>1</sup>

Our range of discussion forums has encouraged members to respond to questions, reflect, share knowledge, explore ideas, swap stories and information. Our three most popular forums this year are as follows.

### Forum one

#### Microteaching and developmental observations

We provided videos where three teacher educators in different countries described how they organised classroom observations of teachers. Members described their own experiences, shared techniques and also expressed frustration with the difficulties of formal, unconstructive observations in traditional contexts.

<sup>1</sup> Wenger, Etienne (2007) 'Communities of practice. A brief introduction'.



My colleagues and I have recently engaged in a three-way peer observation, whereby we plan the session together and each delivers about 20 minutes while the other two discuss what they see and at times give suggestions to the trainer in action (of course without disturbing the trainer in mid-flow). I must say we've all found it incredibly useful, especially as it's right there as it happens and we can make immediate adjustments and see immediate results which we discuss afterward the session in a reflective conversation. Other advantages we've found is that giving feedback after a session, we tend to either forget or not recall fully the whole session; also that in a session feedback we'll try to usually focus on one or two 'main' areas for development, whereas, there are many little adjustments we can make in classes if we're reminded that would have a hugely beneficial impact on learning, for example, someone holding a sign up at the back of the room 'TTT' to remind the trainer to focus the feedback. Finally, as we discuss the trainer in action, we can also apply immediately techniques we noticed the participants responding to.



That's interesting – wanted to check if I understood this correctly but are the three of you co-training the same group of teachers? Does this happen normally or was it planned just for the peer observation?



Three of us are co-delivering a month-long course to Teacher Educators. So it's me, and two Master Trainers who've already done the course we're now cascading further down. So we plan who wants to deliver which sessions, some we deliver alone, some two deliver and some all three deliver...and we're all very keen on PD so the door's always open for others to come into the training room and observe, participate or give feedback...support participants during monitoring, contribute in any way but without being disruptive to the flow.

### Forum two

#### From Teacher to Teacher Educator

Members shared what had motivated them to make the transition to teacher educators. Their experiences included: being inspired by other teacher trainers, moving into mentoring and even volunteering.



Hello everyone!  
Have always been passionate about teaching and it was forever my dream to teach kids for all of my life. Due to certain urgent domestic priorities, had to discontinue my teaching job of 20 years. The urge to be associated with the teaching sector pushed me to enrol in a voluntary service that would require me to teach 'economically challenged' youth for a couple of hours

every day. That was a life changer! Enjoyed my association with them so much that I ended up working full time with that organisation. Along the way we were encouraged to train the new volunteers who were to be first time teachers. I was mentored diligently by the British Council trainers and thus was initiated into my new role of a teacher educator. It's been six years since and am enjoying exploring and learning at every step of my journey.



Hi!

I think for me there was no significant event rather the feeling that there was still so much to learn and so many people to learn from. I also felt and still feel that many teachers conceive CPD as something imposed from above and helping others to see that they can be the 'owners' of their own development is amazing when you actually see how empowered they feel if they do take the bull by the horns and focus on an area that is important to them.

I can see how being encouraged to 'train the new volunteers' would help you to naturally move into a teacher trainer role. Sometimes we need that little 'push', don't you think?

**Forum three**

**Benefits of activity groups**

A video was provided to stimulate discussion. The forum generated much interest with members sharing their knowledge and asking questions to learn more.



I know I am super late joining and replying, but the topic is important for me, and I noticed you are running a webinar on Friday (which I can't attend due to other obligations)

I have been facilitating/coordinating a Reflective Practice Group in Dnipro, Ukraine since 2016. Love the questions you listed in the original post and would love to answer them in more detail on my blog, at some point.

From time to time I post about the group, too: some info and links on what we do, topics, activities, etc. there: <https://wednesdayseminars.wordpress.com/reflectio-n-process/>, and we can of course be in touch via Twitter/Facebook, or other channels.

Good luck with the webinar! I would love to watch a recording, if possible.

**Sharing is not limited to forums**

*Journeys of Reflective Practice* – a publication on the theme of teacher educator professional development through action research was donated to the Community by one of our members.

In November our members responded to our call for examples of case studies for a new Teaching for Success publication with suggestions and ideas from their own experience.

Inspired by the mentoring special, several members shared mentoring stories from their own experience.

Knowing our members' interest in new development opportunities, one of our most active members curated a list of MOOCs to share.

**Resources with a teacher educator focus**



Compared to resources for teachers, there is a limited range of resources available for teacher educators. Our aim is to provide access to resources which very specifically focus on teacher educator work. We seek out publications, research and videos which we can share with members and which inform our selection of topics and underpin discussion forums. Below are some highlights from across the year.

- A series of articles by Tessa Woodward on the theme of teacher educator self-awareness
- A report from a study in Malaysia on professional development for teacher educators
- A new publication: Journeys of reflective practice: strengthening teacher educator professional skills through action research
- Our teacher educator identity topic was introduced in a video with teacher educators from Tunisia, Uruguay and Romania giving their different viewpoints.
- Video on organising teacher observations – one of our most popular topics.
- In October, the publishers of the Teacher Trainer Journal offered a special discount to our members.

**Access to ELT expertise**

As well as our wide range of publications, articles and videos, we commission Webinars. Here are some highlights.

Coaching and Emotional Intelligence by Nik Peachey, course designer, author and education technology consultant

<p><b>Webinar: Coaching and emotional intelligence</b></p>  <p>Join Nik Peachey's webinar on Friday 29 June at 1700 UK. Register here: <a href="https://tinyurl.com/educators-29-june">https://tinyurl.com/educators-29-june</a></p> <p><input type="button" value="Enrol"/> <input type="button" value="More info"/></p> <p>Starts: 18/06/2019</p>	<p><b>Webinar: A conversation on implementing inclusive practices: creating an inclusive school environment</b></p>  <p>In this session, the panel will discuss 'Can we say that our school systems are inclusive and we practice what we preach? This will be an interactive session looking at how we can take small but significant steps through an inclusive practice approach.'</p> <p><input type="button" value="Enrol"/> <input type="button" value="More info"/></p> <p>Starts: 05/03/2019</p>
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**Webinar: Teaching for All: How teacher educators can work with teachers to unlock learning potential in all our learners**



Join Phil Dexter on Thurs 27 September at 1600 UK time.

Enrol [More info](#)

Starts: 19/09/2018

Two webinars on Inclusive Practices by Phil Dexter, our British Council expert on Equality, Inclusion and Diversity. Feedback from members led to the second one as members wanted to explore this important topic further.

Feedback from membership on all of our Webinars has been very positive. Comments from participants show how much they are valued.

**“Both the content and the delivery were innovative and interesting. I like the experimentation with the discussion techniques. Thanks, Phil for a very enlightening webinar. Yes, the seeds are so important. Thank you for this inspiring seminar!”**

In addition to our specially commissioned Webinars, we have encouraged our members to take advantage of Webinars provided by the UK ELT sector.

#### **IATEFL Sig**

- Online task design for teacher trainers
- CPD for new teacher trainers
- Building teacher communities
- Planning, managing and implementing INSETT programmes with experienced teachers in mind

#### **Aqueduto**

- Online language teacher education: Exploring the Aqueduto research report

#### **Macmillan English**

- Strategies to promote and protect language teacher well-being

## **CPD activities which work with challenging, irregular schedules**

With our webinars which are recorded for those who can't make the scheduled times; our discussion forums which can be accessed at any time and the availability of our other resources, our community provides the flexibility needed to enable members to connect and engage at times which fit around their work.

To complement our regular CPD activities, we have introduced 'specials'. These are 'mini-courses' offered on our Thinking Cap platform and enable members to develop skills and knowledge on selected topics in more depth.

Our first special, on the topic of mentoring, was launched in September. Members engaged in a series of activities, including how to set up mentoring programmes, observing and giving feedback to mentees, and how to make mentoring a meaningful CPD experience. The special concluded with a mentoring project which involved peer mentoring amongst our members. One of the participants in the project has scheduled a Webinar to share his experience with the community: *Mentoring teachers and trainers: a recipe for successful programmes*.

## **Recent developments**

### **Research**

Our community co-ordinator, Sirin Soyoz, chose the community as the focus for her Master's thesis. 94 members responded to her call for participation in a survey in January about the professional development needs of teacher educators. In our second year we will be looking at the data Sirin has gathered to see how we can use it to provide more targeted content, as well as to create an article for publication.

## **Our plans for our second year**

### **Improving and extending member participation and engagement**

To coincide with our anniversary, we will launch our second special: developing an online presence. This is aimed at our shy, less confident members and will be followed later in the year by a special aimed at our more skilled and advanced, members.

### **Focusing content more closely on our members professional development needs**

In addition to the research provided by Sirin, we will conduct surveys amongst our members to ensure content matches their needs and interests. We will also offer members opportunities to take on responsibility for some community content.

### **Introducing new CPD opportunities**

We will set up teacher educator activity groups to meet once a month online to discuss items selected by the community.

We will create a 'help corner' where members can ask for advice on anything relating to their teacher educator work

We will provide a space for members to tell their stories.

# Topsy-turvy training: An attempt to blend top-down and bottom-up approaches to in-service language teacher education in China

By Jason Anderson, UK

## Introduction

I recently worked on a four-week, in-service teacher education programme in China. It was a collaboration between a British and a Chinese university, funded by a Chinese philanthropist. This article shares some reflections on the project that may be useful for comparable initiatives. As it was the first joint venture between the two universities, the design was exploratory, and, I think, fairly unusual in how it attempted to incorporate both top-down training and bottom-up teacher research, two threads often seen as distinct. As I evidence below, success was limited with regard to the second of these.

## Logistics

For the course, 67 tertiary-level English teachers from 26 different universities were selected from two of the lowest-income provinces in western China (a stipulation of the donor). Most taught either non-English or English majors, although 15 were pre-service teacher educators. All participants were flown to a large eastern city where the Chinese university was based, and where they remained in residence for the duration of the 4-week course.

The training team included me, two other teacher educators from the UK, and two from China. While collaboration was clearly intended, responsibility for the majority of the delivery of the course was timetabled to the UK educators.



*Topsy-turvy training*

PB

This seemed a missed opportunity for shared planning and delivery that may have resulted partly from an implicitly shared (and obviously mistaken) assumption that the 'English' trainers were the ELT experts (Phillipson, 1992), and partly from the fairly limited interaction possible between us before the course. If a week-long planning workshop, involving all five of us, had been possible well before the course started, it would have led to more collaboration, and greater awareness of aspects of Chinese pedagogy and culture that would have usefully informed the design of the project.

## Design elements

As soon as we were recruited for the project, we (here I include the five teacher educators and the university project coordinators, who were also teacher education professionals) were able to influence the project 'shape', although not the essentially top-down nature implicit in its design and intentions. While there was a clear assumption from key stakeholders that the program should include some input on communicative language teaching (CLT) theory and practice, we also wanted to make the program both participatory, enabling the teachers to have some agency over what happened during the four weeks, and sustainable, providing participants with the skills to be able to draw upon the program to investigate their own teaching in a way that empowered them as practitioners and professionals later on. This led to what might be called 'blended' exploratory action research (EAR), involving four core elements:

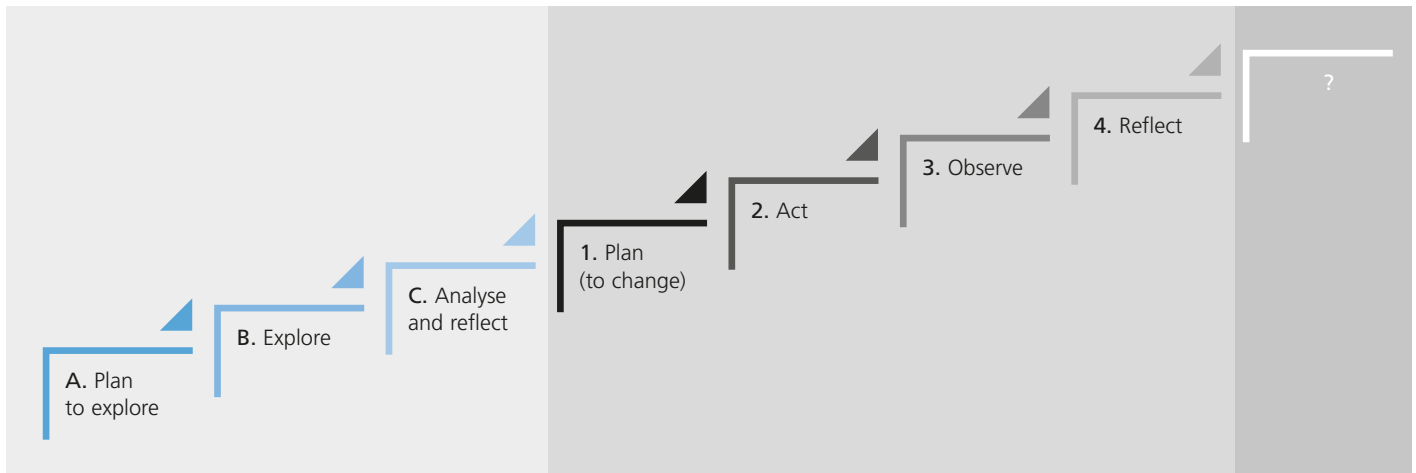
### 1. Traditional training workshops

The majority of workshops involved aspects of teaching theory and practice, delivered from a broadly CLT-oriented perspective, reminiscent of more top-down teacher training programmes. Examples of workshop titles included 'Exploring methods and approaches'; 'Flipping your classroom'; and 'Using L1 to support learning'. These workshops were delivered interactively, including discussion tasks relating theory to practice and beliefs, use of participants' own coursebooks (which had been brought partly for this purpose upon our request) and frequent use of 'loop input' (Woodward, 2003) to exemplify certain practices.

### 2. Introduction to exploratory action research

We included an opportunity for the teachers to carry out their own classroom research as a result of the programme. The main text, chosen for its clarity and user-friendliness was Smith and Rebolledo (2018) Handbook for Exploratory Action Research (EAR see Figure 1). Two whole-day workshops were delivered on EAR, one on the second day and one during the final week of the course.

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*Figure 1. Steps of Exploratory Action Research, reproduced from Smith & Rebolledo with permission (2018, p. 25)*

Two poster presentation sessions were also included at the ends of week 1, when the teachers shared their 'puzzles', 'problems' and initial exploratory research questions, and week 4, when they reported on their initial exploration and their intentions for the next stage of the project.

### 3. Group literature research

A common feature of teacher education programmes at the UK partner university constituted the third element of this programme, in which participating teachers were asked to work together in groups to conduct an exploratory literature review on a topic of interest, leading to a short, semi-academic essay. Teachers were encouraged to access both academic sources, such as peer-reviewed journals, and practical sources, such as websites and magazines for teachers, using the university's library and journal access privileges.

### 4. Microteaching

Finally, two opportunities for micro-peerteaching were provided in weeks 1 and 4 of the course. The teachers, in 3 groups, planned and delivered short, 20-minute lesson segments in teams of two, with some group members acting as students and others as observers who then provided feedback afterwards. Feedback groups were kept small (6-8 members), and involved reciprocal feedback (i.e., teaching teams A, B and C were all in the same feedback group, and gave feedback on each other's lessons only). Although this programme element involved the dangerously artificial scenario of teachers pretending to be students, it provided an opportunity, both for us the trainers (in week 1) to get a sense of what these teachers did in their own classrooms, and an opportunity (in week 4) for the teachers to demonstrate initial understanding of ideas explored on the course.

### Combining exploratory action research with group research projects

While the above description summarises the 4 main elements initially envisaged, in our last meeting as trainers before the course began, one member of the team suggested we combine

the second and third elements; EAR and group literature research. We agreed to try this combination, recognising that two potential benefits outweighed one potential disadvantage. The perceived advantages were:

- 1 An opportunity for teachers to conduct their first piece of practitioner research collaboratively, allowing for peer-teaching, a shared workload and experience (see Allwright's vision of practitioner research as a 'First Person Plural' Notion', 2005, p. 357), and the possibility that this might further build their practitioner community of practice;
- 2 The combination would serve as a bridge to link the second and third elements of the programme, allowing the teachers to explore the puzzles or problems identified in the first week through the literature research project, thereby linking the literature research directly to their own classroom practice.

The potential disadvantage was that it may be difficult for teachers to bring their own, individually identified puzzles and problems together into shared areas of interests appropriate to the groupwork project. We expected that some of the teachers would identify related puzzles (e.g. issues to do with learner motivation or the use of pairwork and groupwork, which tend to be common on exploratory practice and EAR projects: Hanks, 2017; Rebolledo et al., 2016), but also that others may identify quite specific personal puzzles that would not lend themselves to group research, thereby necessitating a compromise between their own interests and our expectation for teachers to do the literature research in groups.

### Programme delivery

The programme was delivered largely as planned. Mid-course feedback led to two minor changes: Participants requested greater flexibility regarding roles for the second microteaching session, and there was a request for demonstration lessons, so several of the trainers micro-taught lessons to participants-as-students using participating teachers' coursebooks to demonstrate aspects of the content of the course (e.g., a lesson incorporating cooperative learning), followed by analysis and critique.



The decision to combine EAR and the group literature research was fairly successful in practice. The 67 teachers were separated into 3 groups for the EAR workshops. During the first workshop, the basic EAR model was introduced (as per Figure 1 above). After an initial activity that encouraged participants to share recent successes in their teaching, participants were able to identify personal puzzles and/or problems in their practice. Most were also able to identify shared themes among their puzzles, which led to the groupings for the literature research project. Groups sizes varied between 2 and 5 members. My groups' topics were:

- 1 motivation of non-English majors;
- 2 designing homework assignments;
- 3 methodology for teaching vocabulary;
- 4 distractions that learners experienced during lessons; and
- 5 an evaluation of the microteaching element of our course programme.

A minority (c.30%) had difficulty linking their puzzles to those of colleagues, and varying levels of compromise were reached, with some 'tweaking' their projects to find a common thread, and two preferring to abandon their own puzzles and join a group of their choice. While this loss of more personal interests was a shame, it seemed that all were happy to be able to research shared concerns in groups. The poster presentation session at the end of week 1 worked well. Although research questions varied in their appropriacy and feasibility, topics were clearly relevant – both to their own classrooms and the course content – and lent themselves well to both literature-based research, and to other exploratory research. For example, a number of the groups elected to develop or adapt exploratory questionnaires, administer them to their own learners remotely (via online administration) and analyse the responses, all within the middle two weeks of the course. Two groups received 250 and 450 responses respectively. Other research groups elected to interview their colleagues on the course, and one, innovatively elected to research the microteaching element of the course, analysing it from the perspective of its aims, and interviewing colleagues to identify advantages and disadvantages of the microteaching process.

Research papers were submitted at the end of week 3, and the 5 papers from my group were generally clear, appropriate in register and interesting to read. We decided to give only qualitative feedback on the papers, delivered through private tutorials with each group, avoiding the need to grade papers, which we felt would be inappropriate.

The second EAR workshop in week 4 introduced participants to the "action research phase" of EAR (Smith & Rebolledo, 2018, p. 67-73). Participants were asked to consider the findings of their exploratory phase and to plan for potential action research projects based on their findings. At this stage, many naturally 're-personalised' their interests, with teachers in several groups choosing to plan slightly different action research phases, aligned to their initial puzzles/problems from week 1. They also planned for the second poster presentation; they were encouraged to present both the findings of their exploratory phase, and their potential action research plans.

While this planning went well, it also became evident that due to heavy workloads and other constraints, many would have difficulty carrying out this action research without both mentoring support from professionals experienced in action research, and support from line managers within their own institutions, for varying reasons, which are also challenges discussed by Allwright (2005), and Hanks (2017).

During the second poster presentation most groups presented interesting posters with feasible projects. Some were able to articulate how they would take their research forward. However, a minority of the groups presented posters that were less clear about their future intentions, indicative evidence that they would not continue with their projects after the course.

## After the programme – a familiar tale

As is still too often the case on many single-shot training courses, I regret to say that the core stakeholders had not planned any follow-up support or impact assessment for the programme. While the teachers had developed strong personal links and seemed committed to making changes in their classrooms, upon completion of initial course evaluation questionnaires, participants returned to their contexts, and we to ours.

Somewhat unsatisfied with this, I subsequently requested, and gained permission to conduct a follow-up webinar seven months later. I contacted all 67 participants and asked how many would be willing to present at the webinar, making it clear that there was no obligation to do so, and they could present either on their action research projects, or on changes they'd made to their teaching since the programme. 30 responded, 12 interested in presenting, and 18 in attending as observers only. The final 2.5-hour webinar involved nine presentations (three were not able to present on the date in question), most focusing on changes made, and only three on research (of whom two presented on their action research, the other on a different project). Zoom video conferencing software (<https://zoom.us/>) was used, and worked well in both China and the UK, and the recorded webinar was shared in closed online groups in both China and the UK.

The two participants who presented on their action research both presented useful findings, although these were largely at the exploratory phase, one on improving students' engagement with story writing, and the other on investigating why students rarely speak in class. While both had tried out a number of potential solutions in their classes, they did so somewhat unsystematically (i.e. the AR phases were not clearly defined, with no data collection, analysis and reflection). Thus, while clearly useful for two dedicated teachers among 67 participants, this indicates that without systematic subsequent support, it cannot be realistically expected that teachers will follow through on EAR projects, an obvious, yet important finding.

Of those that presented on changes to their practice, a number of themes of interest that derived directly from the training programme were detectable in the remaining presentations:

- The principled use of technology in the classroom, including specific apps and websites chosen innovatively to solve specific problems that they faced;

continued >>>

- A number had found the concept of the flipped classroom useful, both to organise and manage ambitious curricula, and to increase opportunities for interactive, learner-centred teaching during the lessons;
- Several discussed their experimentation with groupwork in the classroom since the program, including grouping strategies, increases in student-student interaction and the challenge of getting learners to interact in English during groupwork;
- Specific strategies for student interaction deriving from the training programme that were discussed included the use of jigsaw communication activities (mentioned by four), the use of communication games, such as 'Find Someone Who...', and the use of poster projects, involving collaboration in the preparation stage, and practice of formal speaking skills in the presentation stage;
- Several felt that they had succeeded in engaging their learners more in English language learning, through foci on topics of interest to the learners and their needs, the use of games in the classroom, and the use of positive feedback/reinforcement strategies introduced on the course.

## Conclusion

This project involved a fairly innovative blend of traditional top-down training (non-negotiable and mandated by key stakeholders) and more participatory, participant-led research (introduced later by the training team), demonstrating that while it is probably impossible to transform top-down initiatives into bottom-up ones, by including some of these elements, teachers can be given some agency during the course, and opportunity afterwards. However, it also provides further evidence (see, e.g., Guskey, 2002) that without follow-up support, while impact on teaching practice may occur (here only self-reported), the likelihood of ownership and follow-through with regard to teacher research elements is, unsurprisingly, very low.

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## The Author



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# Article Watch

Below are brief summaries of relevant articles from other journals.

**ELTEd Journal**, vol. 21, 2018.  
[www.elted.net](http://www.elted.net)

'How does a virtual community of practice (COP) for teacher trainers impact on their professional practice', by S. Leather, pp. 1–8. This article reports strong evidence that the COP set up to support the Iranian Teacher Trainer Project and provide the participants with continuous professional development had significant impact on the participants'

training practice in terms of practical day-to-day design, planning, and delivery of training sessions. Findings suggest that a COP is particularly successful when used as an adjunct to face-to-face courses or as part of a long term project, or both.

**ELT Journal**, vol. 73/1, January 2019.  
<https://academic.oup.com/eltj>

'Investigating reflection in written assignments on CELTA courses', by L. MacKenzie, pp. 11–20. This article reports a study analysing reflective assignments from full-time CELTA candidates in order



to investigate the level of reflection they demonstrate. The study also developed a reflective framework that can be used to inform the assessment of reflection on such courses.

**ETp** (*English Teaching Professional*), Issue 122, May 2019.  
[www.etprofessional.com](http://www.etprofessional.com)

'No one told me that!', by B Davies & N Northall, pp 49-51. The last in a series with this title, this article discusses the role and techniques of a new teacher trainer in terms of pastoral care of trainees on intensive, stressful courses. A few examples of difficult situations are given together with tips on how to manage expectations, develop personal skills, display tact and sensitivity, ask for and share advice, and learn from experience.

'Spaced out!', by E Symeonidou, pp. 52-53. This article discusses the reasons why there is sometimes little transfer from a well-prepared, interesting, and well-thought out training session to the participants' own later practical classroom teaching. The author offers the idea of spacing repetitions of learning points over time as a possible solution both within a training session and across longer periods of time. Tips are given on the materials and preparation necessary for this approach.

Issue 123, July 2019. 'Effective classroom management' by R Mohsen & N Baguley, pp. 45-46. The article outlines five challenges in class management often faced by pre-service teacher trainees on courses such as the Cambridge CELTA and Trinity TESOL. These are echoing student answers, moving around during whole class feedback, pointing at students, forgetting key instructions, and speaking at inappropriate speed or volume. Under each challenge the authors outline the problem, give practical solutions, and say why they work.

**MET** (*Modern English Teacher*), vol. 28/1, January 2019.  
[www.modernenglishteacher.com](http://www.modernenglishteacher.com)

'Exercise as a form of professional support', by D Xerri, pp. 24-26. The author recounts his personal history of the physical cost of spending years at a computer, of his subsequent resolve to get more physically active, and of his realisation that we all need to make time for our physical and thus mental and emotional well-being.

'10 things you can do with a decision' K Harding, pp. 71-72. All teacher trainers and managers have to make decisions. This article suggests ten things to help with a decision: Be decisive, consult about it, share it, assess it before you announce it, monitor it, develop it, tell someone about it, ditch it, repair any damage done by it, evaluate it and learn from it, and learn from your decisions.

Vol. 28/3, July 2019. 'The elephant in the room', by C Thaine, pp. 4-6. This article looks at three types of CPD activity: observations, case studies, and a lesson study programme, all having the potential to include the language learner as part of the activity. Language students have often spent a long time sitting in classrooms and can have useful insights to offer less experienced teachers. Useful ideas on: The observer as a learner advocate, suggested procedures to investigate learners' judgements about teaching and procedures to get teachers working together planning and delivering a series of lessons.

'You can take them with you', by R McLarty, pp. 34-35. The author argues that plenty of skills developed in the classroom will be of immediate use in your new role as a manager of other teachers and administrators, projects, resources, and/or students. These are:

Communication, product development, project management, training and PD, course design, assessment, mentoring, enthusiasm, versatility, and class management.

**Professional Development in Education**,  
[www.tandfonline.com/loi/rjie20](http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rjie20)

Vol 44/2, 2018. 'Developing the developers: Supporting and researching the learning of professional development facilitators', by E. Perry & M. Boylan, pp. 254-271. This is a report on a pilot programme for PD facilitators which is rooted in a cycle of a action research. Video observation, peer review, and theories of professional learning are used.

Vol. 45/3, 2019. 'A study of mentors in Wales 'coming to closure'', by J Penikett, C Daly, & E Milton. Preparing for closure is a frequently underestimated responsibility of mentoring. Closure is a mentoring practice characterised by distinct behaviours and actions. In this report of a small-scale study the authors suggest the final mentoring phase be reconceptualised.


**System**, vol 82, June 2019.  
[www.journals.elsevier.com/system](http://www.journals.elsevier.com/system)

'Language teacher education in 'System'', by Q Guo, J Tao, & X Gao, pp. 132-139. This review of *System's* contribution to language teacher education research focuses on ten articles selected from a total of 147 published in the journal up to 2018. A useful overview.

**Teaching and Teacher Education**, vol. 82, June 2019.  
[www.journals.elsevier.com/teaching-and-teacher-education](http://www.journals.elsevier.com/teaching-and-teacher-education)

'Quantifying teacher resilience: Context matters' by S Ainsworth & J Oldfield, pp. 117-128. Questionnaire data was

continued >>>



## Humanising Language Teaching

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collected from 226 UK teachers to identify the relative importance of individual and contextual factors in promoting resilience in teachers. Results suggest that contextual influences on teachers' ability to thrive within the profession are just as important as individual factors.

**Technology, Pedagogy, and Education**, vol. 27/2, April 2018. [www.tandfonline.com/loc/rtpe20/current](http://www.tandfonline.com/loc/rtpe20/current)

'Practical considerations informing teachers' technological decisions: The case of tablet PCs', by N Roblin et al., pp. 165-181. The unique characteristics of tablet PCs promise important benefits

for education. The study reported in this article investigated the practical considerations informing nine secondary school teachers' decision-making processes regarding the use of tablet PCs. Useful reading for anyone attempting to persuade teachers to integrate tablet PCs into their teaching.

## Publications Received

The purpose of these thumbnail summaries of recent publications in ELT and related fields is to broadly indicate topic and points of interest to mentors, teacher trainers and teacher educators. Print size is noted only if unusual. Dimensions are indicated only if exceptionally small or large; E.g., 148pp+ means "148pp plus an informative roman numbered preface, etc". All books are paperback unless otherwise stated. If the book is of a type that requires an index but an index is lacking, the lack is noted.

**The Education Debate, 3rd edn.** S. Ball. (2017). Policy Press. ISBN 978-1-4473-3928-1, 257pp+. In recent decades the British central government Conservative, Labour, or Coalition has subjected the English educational system to a still ongoing series of fundamental changes, and it is now in many ways very different from what it used to be. Written by a sociologist of education, this is *the* book for those who want to know and understand what happened and to grasp its implications.

**Teaching Notes from the Front Line.** D. Kidd. (2014). Independent Thinking Press. ISBN 978-178135131-4, 130pp+. A teacher's experience of her career in the new English educational system (which is described in the *The Education Debate*, just above), with its emphasis on verificational testing, its detailed prescriptions of what to teach, and the heavy pressure on teachers to 'teach to the test'. She calls for a revolution, and gives tips on what teachers can do to help bring it about.

**Making Every Lesson Count: Six Principles to Support Great Teaching and Learning.** S. Allison & A. Tarby. (2015). Crown House. ISBN 978-184590973-4, 281pp+, hardback. This decidedly non-revolutionary book is for teachers who want to succeed, and help their students succeed, in the English educational system as *it is*. For example, teachers who are OK with teaching to the test can find much sound advice about how to do that in this book. The chapter headings are: Challenge, Explanation, Modelling, Practice, Feedback, Questioning, and Embedding the Ethos (with its two core values, excellence and growth). Practical, well-organised.

**Second Language Learning in the Early School Years: Trends and Contexts.** V. Murphy. (2014). Oxford University Press. ISBN 978-0-19-434885-0, 208pp+. The standard text on this subject in English. The chapters are: A typology of contexts; Bilingual development in young children; Heritage language learners; Minority language learners; Majority language learners: immersion education; Instructed foreign language learning in primary school; and Trends, implications, and conclusion.

**Autobiographical Writing and Identity in EFL Education.** S. Yang. (2014). Routledge. ISBN 978-0-415-81487-4, 290pp+, hardback. This book reports work done as part of a PhD programme. The first three chapters are: Introduction to the study, Understanding autobiographical writing & identity; and Research. Then come chapters on four case studies, a chapter discussing the case studies, and the concluding



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chapter. The participating learners were Bai students majoring in English at a Chinese university, the Bai people being one of the officially recognized minority groups in China. Interesting.

**Conversation and Gender.** S. Speer & E. Stokoe (Eds.). (2011). Cambridge University Press. ISBN 978-0-52169603-6, 344pp+. This book comprises 14 chapters, including the introduction, by 18 authors. The main parts (with numbers of chapters) are: Gender, person reference, & self-categorization (3); Gender, repair, & recipient design (3); Gender & action formation (3); Gender identities & membership categorization practices. The contributors are based in North America, the UK, and New Zealand.

**Learning to Learn: International Perspectives from Theory and Practice.** R. Deakin Crick, C. Stringher, & K. Ren (Eds.). (2014). Routledge. ISBN 978-0-415-65624-5, 340pp+. The back cover blurb states that this book

addresses five main questions about learning to learn: What is it? How do we assess it? What good is it to individuals and society at large? How is it represented and taken account of in various national curricula? How can it occur in a variety of contexts? The two main parts of the book are 'Theory' (5 chapters) and 'International research & practice' (9 chapters). Counting the editors there are 20 contributors. Two chapters relating to China. Some of the other countries focused on are Australia, New Zealand, Finland, Spain, USA.

**The Routledge International Companion to Educational Psychology.** A. Holliman (Ed.). (2014). Routledge. ISBN 978-0-415-67560-4, 351pp+. This book includes 32 chapters by 52 contributors representing five continents. The main parts (with number of chapters) are: An introduction to educational psychology (4); How children learn and develop (9), Issues concerning the assessment of children (8), and Identifying and meeting the needs of children with learning difficulties (11). (Interestingly, this last part includes a chapter on meeting the needs of gifted learners.) Each chapter comes with a list of references. An excellent resource for teacher trainers.

**The Routledge International Handbook of Research on Teaching Thinking.** R. Wegerif, L. Li, & J. Kaufman (Eds.). (2015). Routledge. ISBN 978-0-41574749-3, 4787pp+, hardback. This book includes 38 chapters by 59 contributors. The main parts (with number of chapters) are: Theory, history, and context of teaching thinking (TT) (5); Approaches to TT (7); Creativity and creative thinking (6); Critical thinking and meta-cognition (5); Assessment of thinking (5); TT in STEM subjects; and TT through collaboration & new technology. Each chapter comes

with a list of references. A rich source of insights for anyone interested in TT.

**Technology Enhanced Language Learning: Connecting Theory and Practice.** A. Walker & G. White. (2013). Oxford University Press. ISBN 978-0-19-442368-7, 208pp+, ca. A4. The chapters are on: Learning, Communication, Listening, Reading, Writing, Visuals, Study skills & EAP, Young learners, Assessment, Teachers using technology, Choosing & using materials, and 'Summary & future gazing'. Despite its comparative age, this remains a useful handbook on the use of technology in TESOL

**From Whiteboards to Web 2.0: Activating Language Skills with New Technologies.** D. Martin. (2015). Helbling Languages. ISBN 978-3-85272-939-8, 212pp, A4. The aim of this teachers' resource book is to link use of interactive whiteboards (IWs) and the internet. The 81 activities designed to promote interactive communicative language use are presented in three sections according to whether they are image-based, sound- and video-based, or text-based. There are many pointers to resources, including internet tutorials on use of the tutorials described in the book. Looks very useful.

**A Syllabus for Listening-Decoding.** R. Cauldwell. (2018). *Speech in Action*. ISBN 978-0954344771, 240pp+, ca. A4, no index. Essential reading for any teacher of English to speakers of another language. Cauldwell proposes, for example, that the teacher can work on three levels of analysis with respect to a recorded listening text: meaning, words, and 'sound substance'. A teacher who follows a typical TESOL coursebook will rarely get to the last level. Result: Learners for whom authentic speech is largely incomprehensible. Cauldwell

explains in detail and wonderfully clearly why it is necessary to teach the workings of the sound substance (i.e., what language sounds like when words are squashed together in authentic speech) and presents ways of doing so. His example snippets of sound substance often display squashings that do not occur in all main varieties of English nor even in all main varieties of British English (e.g., not in Scottish English) but readers should still easily see what Cauldwell is driving at. One thing, although "Cauldwell (2013)" is cited now and again, it is not in the list of references: It is *Phonology for Listening* (www.speechinaction.com).

**Classroom Community Builders: Activities for the First Day & Beyond** by Walton Burns, Alphabet Publishing: 2017 ISBN: 978-0-9977628-7-7 paperback, 978-0-9977628-6-0 ebook, 160 pp. The aim of this book is having students working together toward mutually beneficial goals. The book is divided into four sections: *Set Your Expectations*, *Working Together*, *Getting to Know You*, and *Get to Know Your Teacher*. Activities included vary in length from 5 to 60 minutes and provide description and steps to follow. Timing, materials, procedure, language, photocopiable worksheets, and links to useful websites are provided

There are variations to give extra practice or to extend the topic in most of the activities. Although these activities can be very helpful to ensure group dynamics, some of them may not fit specific contexts, especially in terms of age differences, cultural background, and personality. Teachers with new groups will welcome having these ideas at hand so they can speed the community building process in their classes.

continued >>>

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**How to Explain Absolutely Anything to Absolutely Anyone.** A Tharby (2018) Crown House. ISBN 978-178583367-0, 173pp, no index. The back cover promises that a set of “remarkably simple techniques” can “revolutionise the precision and clarity” of our explanations. The highlighted techniques are use of metaphor, repetition, and storytelling. The approach is described as evidence-based and the text does include some references to the experimental literature. The chapters are: Subject knowledge; Credibility and clarity; Explanation design; Concepts, examples, & misconceptions; Metaphor & analogy; Storytelling; Elaboration; Getting better at explaining. This reviewer’s experience suggests that explaining things is a skill that many teachers (and coursebook writers) urgently need to develop. This book, despite its generality regarding subject matter, could offer language teacher trainers some useful ideas.

**Cognate Vocabulary in Language Acquisition and Use: Attitudes, awareness, Activation** A Otwinowska (206) Multilingual Matters ISBN 978-1-78309-4370, 282pp+, no index The main parts are: Bilingual & multilingual language use; Defining lexical crosslinguistic similarity; Lexical crosslinguistic similarity in use; Investigating crosslinguistic similarity in language learning. Like many other researchers with an interest in the acquisition of still-spoken additional languages, the author includes more or less recently borrowed vocabulary in the category of cognate. Hence, languages such Japanese and English are considered to have many cognate words even though these languages have no known common ancestral language. Although parts of the book may be over-detailed

for some readers, it is rich in information that teachers of an additional language ought to know about.

**Engagement** I Wallace & L Kirkman, eds (2018) Crown House. ISBN 978-178583247-5, 166pp+, no index, truly pocket-size. The topic of this book is *teacher* engagement, which is taken to be a major factor in the motivation and engagements of learners. In large part this book is a string of mini-bios of people who have written about learning and teaching, with each mini-bio being followed by an excerpt from something that person has written along with suggestions for further reading. The editors (or co-authors?) have provided linking commentary. The rationale for this format is to present (dozens of) viewpoints, tips, and strategies in a manner tempting to a busy teacher. We have reviewed other books in this praiseworthy series. A couple dozen pages have white print on black background. That may not suit every reader.

**Elite Girls’ Schooling, Social Class, and Sexualised Popular Culture** C Charles (2014) Routledge. ISBN 978-0-415-63656-8, 173pp+, hardback. The author says, “The growing cultural presence of privileged girls and girls’ power requires scholarly attention, in terms of how dominant configurations of sexuality, class, and race are reproduced through the depictions of such girls in media culture, and in terms of how ‘real’ privileged girls navigate cultural messages about empowerment, as well as how constructions of identity may work to (re)produce and/or resist dominant configurations of femininity” (p. 1). The author focuses on elite girls to complement the much greater amount of scholarly attention given to situations of working class and ethnic young women and girls (p. 8).

**Mixed-Ability Teaching.** E. Dudley & A. Osváth. (2015). Oxford University Press. ISBN 978-0-19-420038-7, 112pp, ca. A4. This book is in “a series of short, practical guides to help teachers who work in the primary and secondary school setting to make sense of new teaching tools, techniques, and educational policy, with ideas for implementation” (back cover). Something unusual about this book is that you have to look hard to see that it was written for TEFL teachers rather than, say, for CLIL teachers or teachers in general. The 24 chapters of the book are in eight sections, including ones on: Preparing for a mixed-ability class, classroom management, using L1, working with language, and assessment. All essential issues seem to be touched on. The overall approach is humanistic. Interestingly, there are pointers to websites but not to any of the many previously published books on or relating to mixed-ability teaching.

**Film in Action: Teaching Language Using Moving Images.** K. Donaghy. (2015). Delta. ISBN 978-1-909783-07-2, 112 pp. The back cover blurb boldly announces that this book ‘places the moving image at the centre of...21st century language learning’. As in all books in Delta’s series of teachers’ resource books, part one is a detailed introduction plus pointers to resources and sources of further information; part two presents the activities (over 100 in this case); and part three expands the topic beyond the time-frame of any individual lesson and beyond the individual classroom setting. The activities fall into two sections: Watching actively and Actively producing. Quite small print.

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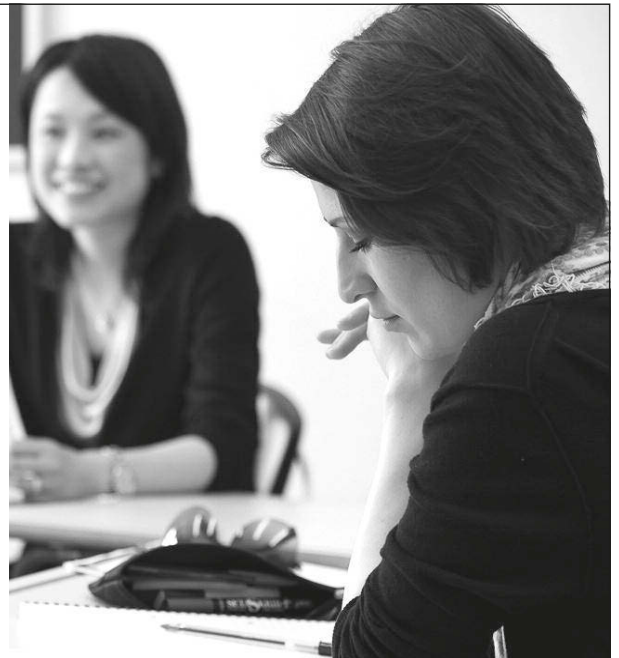


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