

The  
**Teacher Trainer**

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

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**A**  
*Pilgrims*  
**Publication**

ISSN 0951-7626



Summer 2020

**A message for all readers, subscribers and supporters of  
*The Teacher Trainer Journal***

Hello! First a little look back....

By 1986 I was working in the UK again after some years away. Mario Rinvoluceri had suggested the idea of Pilgrims starting up a newsletter for teacher trainers. He asked me to be the editor. And so, in that Autumn, I put out a complimentary pilot issue called *The Teacher Trainer Newsletter* and we were off!

Now, in 2020, thirty-four years later, a different constellation of events has occurred.

Our wonderful, part-time, journal administrator, Marian Nicholson, has found herself a really interesting and very busy post. And your Editor would like to spend a bit more time on short story writing. So, Marian and I have given in our resignations together.

This means that after the Summer 2020, Volume 34 Number 2 issue of TTTJ, Chaz Pugliese will be taking over. Chaz has been connected to Pilgrims for a long time and is currently heading up Pilgrims Teacher Training.

The second set of new events involve the current pandemic of COVID-19. This means that we have to change from printing and posting the next editions of the journal to sending you an electronic version, but of course, still with the same great content!

As TTTJ Editor, I have absolutely loved the job of getting people into print, especially newcomers to professional writing. I have had wonderful people to work with; administrators, graphic designers, printers, cartoonist, publishers, et al. I want to thank everyone from Mario onwards for giving me the chance to be the Editor for so long and for making things so pleasant and interesting. I also wish Chaz the same enjoyment as he takes the journal forward.

All good wishes

Tessa Woodward  
The Editor  
The Teacher Trainer

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The Teacher Trainer Journal is a Pilgrims Publication of Instill Education Limited

(Company number 4624333) at OISE House, 38 Binsey Lane, Oxford OX2 OEY, England.

It is published three times a year.

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Views expressed in the articles are not necessarily those of the Editor or Pilgrims.

Designed and printed by the University of Kent, Design & Print Centre, Canterbury, Kent, UK.

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# Editorial

Welcome to the second issue of our thirty fourth volume.

As you will see from the letter opposite, on the inside of the front cover, this is a time of change for us at the journal. It is also of course a time of change for all of us worldwide because of the current pandemic and resulting social restrictions. This is why we are sending out this issue in electronic form only and a little early. We are all in lock down here, working from home, and keen to make sure that, despite the lack of print, you don't miss out on interesting content! So, despite the strange circumstances, we hope you enjoy the articles in the issue.

As ever, online at: [www.tttjournal.co.uk](http://www.tttjournal.co.uk) you can find a free selection of back articles too and some extras in the TTTJ Plus section!

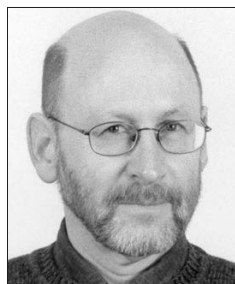
My thoughts go out to everyone in the TTTJ community. I hope you are keeping your spirits up and are healthy and safe. These are challenging times.

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.

# Large-scale teacher development through mentoring

By Simon Borg, ELT Consultant, Slovenia and Jon Parnham, British Council, India

## ELISS: The English Language Initiative for Secondary Schools (ELISS)

The English Language Initiative for Secondary Schools (ELISS) was a four-year teacher development project for government secondary school teachers of English in Maharashtra, a large state (307,000 km<sup>2</sup>) in the west of India which is divided into 36 districts and where English is (at least) the third language for students (after Marathi and Hindi). The project ran from 2014 to 2017 and was implemented by the British Council in partnership with the Government of Maharashtra. A needs analysis of secondary English lessons in the state (Mody, 2013) had highlighted the prevalence of didactic teaching focused on textbook content with limited opportunities for students to use English purposefully.

The educational authorities had thus determined that ELISS should seek to promote more communicative secondary English lessons, with a focus on:

- encouraging teachers and students to use English more widely in class
- making lessons more interactive, through pair and group work
- giving more attention to the development of students' spoken fluency
- equipping teachers to use a wider range of non-textbook materials
- more motivating and enjoyable classroom activities for students.

Facilitating these kinds of changes in secondary ELT classrooms in Maharashtra was thus the overall purpose of ELISS. Additionally, the project also sought to build local capacity for in-service teacher education.

In its first two years, ELISS employed a cascade model. A group of 420 secondary school teachers were chosen to become Master Trainers and each year they received six days of intensive training in communicative language teaching methodology. After each training block, they cascaded five days of ELT workshops to teachers in their districts and approximately 16,400 teachers received this training. The evaluation results at the end of Year 2 were encouraging, but questions were starting to arise about the impact of a cascade model on teaching and learning (for a discussion of the limitations of cascade training in ELT, see Hayes, 2000; Wedell, 2005). The education authorities thus wanted to explore an alternative approach to professional development that was more on-going and classroom-based and which could be applied at scale. It was agreed that in Years 3 and 4 of ELISS a mentoring model would be introduced.

## Mentoring

The value of mentoring has been widely discussed in education generally (Davis, 2014) and in ELT (Malderez & Bodoczky, 1999). It is the dialogic, collaborative and non-judgemental process through which one teacher (the mentee) receives support from a more experienced and/or qualified colleague (the mentor). A wide range of benefits of mentoring for language teachers have been identified (see the review in Asención Delaney, 2012) and these include enhanced reflective skills, deeper understandings of teaching and learning, and improved collegial relationships. While often discussed with reference to novice teachers (for example, Mann & Tang, 2012), mentoring is equally valuable in the professional development of experienced practitioners.

Several analyses (for example, Martin, Kragler, Quatroche, & Bauserman, 2014) have suggested that professional development is more likely to lead to sustained positive change in teachers' knowledge, beliefs and practices when it

- involves teachers in decisions about what they learn
- fosters collaboration and the sharing of expertise among teachers
- is situated in schools and classrooms
- values inquiry and reflection as central professional learning processes
- is seen as an ongoing process rather than a periodic event.

Against these criteria, mentoring rates well. The focus of mentoring is determined by teachers themselves, which immediately enhances the relevance of the process. It is also clearly a collaborative activity through which the mentor and mentee share, discuss and learn together (this is an important point: mentoring can be enriching for mentors too, though this may not always occur – for an example from ELT see Arnold, 2006). Mentoring takes place in schools and is thus an inherently situated (i.e. grounded in immediate practical contexts) form of professional development. Inquiry and reflection (rather than input and knowledge transmission) are also central to mentoring, as teachers are encouraged (with support from their mentor) to critically examine how they teach, why they do so in particular ways, and how their work impacts on students. Finally, mentoring occurs over time, through repeated encounters between the mentor and the mentee and ongoing processes of planning, acting and reflecting by the teacher. It is clear, then, that mentoring incorporates many features which are seen to make professional development for teachers more effective.

In ELISS, the decision to move from a cascade model in Years 1 and 2 to mentoring in Years 3 and 4 was thus theoretically motivated by an awareness of the benefits mentoring could have for ELT professionals.

## Mentoring in ELISS

In Year 3 of ELISS, the new mentoring model was piloted. Eighty Master Trainers from Years 1 and 2 of the project voluntarily attended a five-day mentoring course. This was informed by an awareness of the attributes effective mentors need and covered areas such as the role of a mentor, developing positive relationships with mentees, conducting developmental observations and promoting constructive post-lesson discussions. Following the course, each mentor was allocated up to 15 mentees from amongst teachers who had attended the earlier cascade workshops and who worked both in the mentors' own schools and in other schools in the same district. While this arrangement required mentors to travel around schools, it also meant that a wider range of teachers were able to participate in the project. Most teachers volunteered, though in some cases they were encouraged to participate by their school principal. All teachers on the project worked with the same secondary curriculum and, as experienced teachers, mentors were familiar with this curriculum and the quite homogeneous public school system in their districts.

The three key roles of ELISS mentors were to:

- support the mentees in identifying developmental goals related to their teaching that they would work towards over the school year
- meet each mentee once a month to discuss their goals and any issues they had related to their teaching. If it was not possible to meet face-to-face, the mentors talked with their mentees on the phone and through WhatsApp
- conduct developmental observations (including pre- and post-lesson discussions) with each mentee at least twice a year.

In the final year of ELISS, the mentoring pilot was scaled up to involve the remaining 340 Master Trainers. There were thus a total of 420 mentors working with around 6,300 teachers of English across Maharashtra.

While the number of teachers each mentor worked with may seem high, it must be acknowledged that in large-scale projects of this kind tensions often arise between what is theoretically desirable (maximising contact between mentors and teachers) and what educational authorities demand (maximising the number of teachers involved). It was thus decided that 15 teachers per mentor, while involving a larger group of teachers, would still feasibly allow mentors to support their mentees in the ways envisaged.

## Project Evaluation

Evaluations took place at the end of Years 3 and 4 in order to examine the following questions:

- 1 What were mentors' and mentees' perceptions of the impact of mentoring on their work?
- 2 In pre-observation and post-observation meetings with teachers, to what extent did mentors apply effective mentoring skills and strategies?

3 In the observed lessons of mentees, to what extent were they teaching English more communicative and interactively?

4 What challenges did mentors face in their work?

To answer these questions, information was collected from various sources. All interviews and observations were conducted by the first author in his role as an evaluation consultant.

Focus group interviews were conducted separately with mentors and mentees (keeping the groups separate meant each could talk more freely about their experiences). A total of 80 mentors and 88 mentees contributed to these sessions (in groups of 6-10), which focused on the extent to which, and how, ELISS has impacted on the work of both groups. Written notes of the discussions were made and recurrent themes across the focus groups were extracted through a thematic analysis of these notes.

A total of 45 mentoring sessions were also observed. Written notes were made by observers of how the mentoring session was conducted and these allowed for an analysis of the nature of the interaction between mentors and mentees, including the balance of talk and turn-taking, and the topics covered during the meetings.

Observations were also conducted of 30 lessons (approximately 40 minutes each) taught by mentees in six districts. Descriptive notes about what teachers and students did were made and these were subsequently reviewed to identify recurrent features of the lessons observed.

Finally, questionnaires were completed by 166 mentors at the end of the project. They were asked for their views on the difference that ELISS had made to their work as mentors and to the work of their mentees. They were also asked about any challenges they had faced during the project.

## Results

### Perceptions of impact

Mentors and teachers were asked for their views about the impact of mentoring on their work. Their responses were overwhelmingly positive. For example, in Year 3, focus groups with 37 mentors consistently highlighted the collective view that they had become more confident in their ability to support mentees and that they felt more knowledgeable in giving teachers advice. A further 53 mentors taking part in focus group discussions in Year 4 also identified many ways in which they had benefited from the project. Key recurrent themes were that they had learned much themselves from observing and talking to their mentees, felt mentoring makes observation a more positive experience for teachers and were receiving more recognition in their own schools as a result of being mentors.

Earlier it was noted that, in response to a needs analysis of secondary ELT in Maharashtra, the educational authorities wanted ELISS to promote communicative language teaching (CLT). CLT was thus a focus of the training mentors received and of the support they provided to teachers.

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During focus group discussions, teachers were asked if they felt the project had made a difference to their work; they were consistently positive in their responses and identified a wide range of impacts, including:

- greater confidence in the classroom
- willingness to use new activities and materials
- more communicative lessons
- less traditional teaching (e.g. reduced use of translation)
- more student-centred lessons
- increased enjoyment from teaching
- greater use of English in class.

These responses suggest ELISS was seen to have played a part in encouraging teachers to adapt (compared to the findings of the earlier needs analysis) their practices. For example, the set textbook had typically been the exclusive source of material used during English lessons. During ELISS, and with the support of their mentors, teachers reported a willingness to use other sources of often authentic material, including from online sources.

At the end of the project, mentors' perceptions of impact were assessed more quantitatively (on a scale of high, moderate, low and none) and the figures here were also encouraging: over 82% of 166 mentors said the impact of the project on them had been high while over 97% felt there had been at least moderate impact on their mentees.

### Mentoring practices

Observations of mentoring sessions provided evidence that mentors were implementing ideas and strategies promoted during the mentor preparation course, such as asking a range of questions to stimulate mentee reflections and providing constructive feedback. Relationships between mentors and mentees were also seen to be consistently good. There were, though, various aspects of the pre- and post-lesson discussions observed which suggested that mentors would have benefited from further opportunities to reflect on and develop their mentoring skills. For example, the discussions were often brief, as in the example from a post-lesson discussion below (M=Mentor, T=Teacher):

M: Lovely, nice lesson.

T: Thanks

M: What do you think about the lesson?

T: Not very nice.

M: Which things?

T: Student participation, I should have more participation.

M: How?

T: *Does not respond.*

M: Use pairs or groups more. Give them more time to discuss. Everything went well. You monitored very well. But give chance to some students. Praising and encouraging was very nice. You could use the L1 to explain vocabulary. Introduction was clear and you monitored nicely. The students were engaged.

The observations also highlighted cases where the mentors tended to dominate the discussions and found it difficult to balance speaking and listening to their mentees. This is how one post-lesson session started:

M: So madam, very good lesson, very nice lesson. I observed six areas. Your instruction was very clear, very clear ... use of time effectively. Lesson was too long (?). Very nice. Teachers' simple English language. Good. Use Marathi. Ok. Group activity properly monitoring. You guided them very well, very nice. I have some questions. Do you think your lesson is successful?

The mentee, understandably, did not have much to add to the mentor's detailed analysis, and the discussion ended soon after.

Overall, then, observations of mentors at different points of the project suggested that they were aware of and had adopted a range of effective mentoring practices but that there was scope for the further development of these. In absolute terms, it might be argued that many of the mentoring relationships fostered during the project did not reflect theoretical ideals characterised by deep, reflective, mentee-driven dialogic encounters. However, it is important to remember that mentoring was a wholly new idea for both the mentors and the teachers they supported. Receiving supportive advice from a fellow teacher was a significant departure from the kinds of evaluative supervision teachers were used to. Given the limited awareness of mentoring that existed prior to ELISS, then, the achievements of the project in enabling mentors and mentees to engage in regular supportive discussions (albeit with varying degrees of reflective quality) were noteworthy.

### Mentees' lessons

Observations of mentees' English lessons highlighted a number of common features:

- group work
- opportunities for students to speak English
- teaching aids such as posters and pictures
- game-like activities
- limited use of languages other than English by the teacher and students
- positive rapport between the teacher and students.

There was clear evidence, then, that mentees were, in line with the goals of the project, making lessons more communicative, interactive and enjoyable. However, it is also clear that while teachers were adopting new techniques and activities, they needed more support in designing coherent lessons which have clear objectives and which support the development of students' English. Many lessons did, in fact, also have the following characteristics:

- a sequence of activities which were not linked in any logical way
- activities without any specific focus on the language these might develop or which students needed to complete them
- no teacher feedback on the accuracy of students' language

- a focus on learning content (e.g. information in texts) rather than English
- reliance on choral responses with limited evidence of teachers nominating specific students to check their understanding
- no real group work (so physical groups but no activities that require students to interact or work together).

Again, though, compared to how English was being taught at the start of the project, it was clear that teachers were more aware of the value of making lessons more communicative, familiar with a range of ways of doing so and willing to try out new activities in class.

### Challenges

Mentors were also teachers and it had been stipulated that they would get a workload reduction of one day a week for mentoring work. In Year 3, mentors reported that this reduction was not always being provided by school principals. To address this, in Year 4 the Government of Maharashtra issued an official resolution which formalised mentors' role, including the associated workload. Nonetheless, at the end of the project, over 57% of mentors reported ongoing difficulties in securing a reduced teaching load. As a consequence, mentors varied in how often they were able to visit their mentees or how long they were able to spend in schools. Not every school visit, therefore, included the full cycle of pre-observation meeting, lesson observation and post-lesson discussion. In fact, at the end of the project, fewer than 30% of the mentors said they always completed all stages of the cycle and pre-observation meetings were often held over the phone. This is an example of the kind of administrative challenge that can arise on large-scale teacher development projects in complex and often bureaucratic state educational systems.

Various other administrative and attitudinal challenges emerged from the evaluation of the project. There is no space to discuss them but for reference we list them here and return to some in the implications we present below:

- some mentees did not want to be observed
- some mentees did not feel they needed to improve their teaching (especially where their students were doing well)
- mentees were worried about being assessed by mentors during observations
- mentees did not sometimes understand the purpose of mentoring
- some mentors felt that visiting their mentees' schools involved too much travel
- local education authorities were not always aware of or supportive of mentoring.

### Implications

ELISS was a large-scale project that took place in a specific ELT context but the results we have presented have implications for the use of mentoring in ELT professional development more generally. Below are seven suggestions which will be of value to organisations who (irrespective of scale) are considering a mentoring scheme for ELT.

- 1 The ongoing, collegial, constructive and classroom-based nature of mentoring can provide an appealing alternative to conventional forms of teacher training.** In many contexts worldwide, infrequent presentations or workshops are the only form of professional development teachers have access to. Mentoring provides an alternative which, as the results here have illustrated, teachers perceive as valuable in enabling them to enhance their work in the classroom as well as also improving their confidence and motivation. Teachers also believed that, as a result of what they learned through mentoring, students enjoyed English lessons more.
- 2 It is important to provide initial preparation for mentors.** It cannot be assumed that that every experienced teacher is ready to become a mentor and it is thus important to consider the attributes that mentors require and to provide initial support to foster the development of these attributes. The literature on mentoring discussed earlier provides much helpful advice in this respect. On ELISS, mentors did clearly benefit from the training they were given in preparation for their new role and there is no doubt that, compared to the start of the project, by its end mentors had developed a much greater awareness of what mentoring is and acquired enhanced mentoring knowledge and skills.
- 3 Ongoing support for mentors' development is also essential.** At the same time, though, ELISS suggests that mentors needed further support to develop higher levels of competence in observing teachers, helping them identify areas for development, and guiding teachers to reflect and act on these. Mentors would have benefited during the project from ongoing opportunities to reflect on and develop their own mentoring practices and we would recommend that professional development initiatives that utilise mentoring consider ways in which such opportunities can be created. For example, peer observation among mentors might be a feasible way for them to continue their own development. Where feasible, technology can be utilised for such a purpose; for example, mentors might audio or video record examples of their pre- and post-lesson discussions, share these (within an ethically sound framework) digitally with other mentors or advisors, and receive feedback on these in writing and/or through online discussion.
- 4 Where a strong tradition of observation for teacher evaluation exists, time and support will be needed for teachers and other stakeholders to understand how mentoring is different.** In many ELT contexts, teachers are observed only for the purposes of evaluation, and observers are in a position of authority. Mentoring offers a more positive role for teacher observation, including a more collegial observer-observee relationship, but teachers may need time and support to appreciate this. As ELISS showed, initial resistance to being observed by some teachers is to be expected, while others will not adopt a sufficiently active role in their own professional learning and defer unquestioningly to their mentor. It is thus important for organisations planning to set up mentoring to take account of existing attitudes to teacher observation and to provide the support teachers and other stakeholders (such as school principals) need to understand the non-evaluative and more collegial role of observation in mentoring.

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- 5 Support for mentoring from educational authorities or organisational leaders will make a big difference to its effectiveness.** It is important to identify individuals within an organisation or educational system who have leadership and/or powerful administrative roles and to ensure that they engage positively with mentoring from the outset. ELISS was an official State Education Department project, but the size of Maharashtra meant that local districts retained significant levels of autonomy. At the start of Year 3, orientation sessions for the headteachers from the 80 schools where mentors were based had been organised, but levels of attendance were not high. Headteachers were thus often insufficiently aware of the project and of the processes and purposes of mentoring. For example, some headteachers reportedly joined mentors in class when they were observing mentees and openly criticised the teachers; this created additional stresses for mentees and countered attempts to help them see observation as a positive and non-threatening process. The need to engage leaders and administrators positively is thus another key implication from ELISS which has broader relevance for the implementation of mentoring in ELT.
- 6 Expectations about how much change can be achieved need to be realistic.** Various factors will determine how much change in teachers' work mentoring can lead to. The quality of mentors, how often they can work with their mentees, teachers' willingness to engage in the process, and (as just discussed), the degree of systemic support for mentoring, were all influential factors on ELISS. Teachers on the project did make positive changes to their teaching and although there was much room for further development, it would have been unrealistic given the project's parameters to expect many teachers to achieve radical changes in how they teach. In setting up mentoring, it is important to consider the prevailing conditions and to ensure expectations are set accordingly. Highly skilled mentors who work regularly with motivated teachers in a supportive environment can be expected to achieve more than is possible in a context with less favourable conditions.
- 7 Impact evaluation is an important part of mentoring projects.** ELISS was characterised by a robust evaluation framework and evidence of impact was collected at different points of time from a range of sources. Due to the large scale of the project, various technical challenges did arise, for example, in terms of obtaining representative insights into the work of mentors and mentees. However, irrespective of scale, it is important on mentoring initiatives that sufficient attention be given not just to the implementation of mentoring but to the evaluation of the impact it has on key stakeholders. Ideally, impact will be assessed using both quantitative and qualitative measures, but we recognise, that budgetary and other resource constraints will always call for compromises to be made between what is desirable and what is feasible. The goal should thus be to have in place evaluation mechanisms which are not only robust but also feasible given the resources available (see Borg, 2018 for a discussion of evaluating professional development initiatives).

## Conclusion

The mentoring phase of ELISS was ambitious, involving 420 mentors and some 6,300 teachers across a large geographical area and in a bureaucratically complex educational system. The shift from a cascade model to mentoring was also a significant one both for the educational authorities and for the mentors and mentees involved in the project. Overall, despite the various challenges we have highlighted here, there is no doubt that mentoring generated high levels of enthusiasm among mentors and mentees, instilled a desire to innovate among many of them, made English lessons more enjoyable for many teachers and students, and promoted the kind of collegial professional learning climate that makes a strong case for the wider adoption of mentoring as a professional development strategy in ELT.

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# The link between the teaching and learning of mathematics and physics through English at school and at university

By Francesca Costa, Italy

## Introduction and rationale for the study

Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) training for content teachers is usually carried out by English language specialist teacher trainers. Their role is not only to improve the English competence of content teachers but also to raise awareness of the importance of the language within a content course. In Italy, which is the context of the present study, this kind of training can only be delivered to subject-matter teachers. However, in other parts of the world, it is also targeted to language teachers or teachers who have a dual competence (content and language as, for example, in Germany). This article describes an activity (and a related study) performed during a CLIL training course where part of the aim was to highlight the content teachers' relationship with the English language.

The present study was carried out in Italy, where both CLIL and EMI are expanding (Lopriore, 2017). In fact, CLIL in schools is obligatory by law (Moratti Law 53/2003, Presidential decree of March 15, 2010) during the last year of level II secondary school and starting from the third year at language high schools. This situation has brought about an increase in CLIL courses in schools as well as the training of teachers to enable this ambitious project to be implemented. In fact, the profile of CLIL teachers requires certification at a C1 level in the language taught along with both language and methodological training (Directorial decree of April 16, 2012 [https://www.unich.it/sites/default/files/allegatiparagrafo/24-05-2016/decreto\\_direttoriale\\_16aprile2012\\_clil.pdf](https://www.unich.it/sites/default/files/allegatiparagrafo/24-05-2016/decreto_direttoriale_16aprile2012_clil.pdf)).

EMI courses in Italy are expanding rapidly (Broggini and Costa, 2017), as they are in the rest of Europe (Wächter and Maiworm, 2014). There are several reasons for this, including the need to make local students more international and to attract foreign students in a world that has also become globalized in terms of university education. Ninety percent of universities provide such courses, which are also promoted by a specific law for universities (Gelmini Law 240/2010).

Despite the growth in CLIL and EMI, and the clear link between the last year of secondary school and the start of university, there has not yet been a study dealing with teacher training programmes which focus on the characteristics of continuity/discontinuity in terms of teaching/learning at the two educational levels and with the expectations at both levels. The present study accepts Smit and Dafouz's (2012: 2) appeal to combine studies on CLIL with those on EMI in order "[...] to complement the established CLIL research interest in compulsory education by focusing specifically on tertiary educational settings [...]". In the same vein Macaro, Curle, Pun, Jiangshan and Dearden (2018: 69) in their systematic review on EMI present some questions and issues on which to reflect. One of the questions is indeed "What challenges do students face as they make the transition from secondary education EMI or CLIL to university programmes taught through EMI?"

To this end, the present study starts from the perceptions recorded during a training course of the two main actors in ensuring continuity: secondary and university teachers and students in northern Italy, where the first CLIL and EMI courses appeared. To narrow the field of analysis, the focus will be on those disciplines that are more international in nature such as mathematics and physics, as suggested by Macaro (2018: 260) "Would it be interesting to bring together on a professional development course, say, EMI science teachers in the upper-secondary phase with Science teachers in the early stages of the tertiary phase and to evaluate the benefits of the interaction on teachers' thinking and pedagogy?" The research questions are the following:

- Where does the continuity and discontinuity between the two levels (secondary/tertiary) of instruction reside in the teaching of maths and physics in English in the view of teachers/lecturers?
- What are the perceptions of learners (university students) with respect to their previous CLIL experiences at secondary school and their present and future EMI experiences at university?

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- Beyond the scientific and research aim, the study has the pedagogical-didactic aim of serving as an instrument for teacher training, given that the study was planned during a CLIL teacher training course, as well as that of raising awareness among all actors of the importance of continuity between different levels of instruction.

## Review of terminological issues

Given the lack of studies on the educational transition between CLIL and EMI, this section will focus on the definition of terms that often create problems due to their interchangeability (Macaro, 2018). The term for the teaching of a subject through a language in secondary school is CLIL, while for universities the most used term is EMI (Aguilar 2015). This is truer in Europe than in other areas, for example, Asia, where EMI is also used for primary and secondary schools (Wannagat, 2007). At the tertiary level, however, the term CLIL is also used (Dafouz, Nuñez and Sancho, 2007; Greere and Räsänen, 2008; Ricci Garotti, 2009; Fortanet-Gómez, 2010; Aguilar and Rodriguez, 2012).

The acronym CLIL already indicates the integration of language and content (Nikula, Dafouz, Moore and Smit, 2016) without reference to a particular language; in fact, it seeks to promote multilingualism. EMI, on the other hand, clearly refers to English and does not explicitly imply any integration between language and content. At the university level the term ICLHE (Integrating Content and Language in Higher Education) is also used; this was coined in 2003 at Maastricht and is quite similar to the CLIL model, and thus places emphasis on language as well as content.

As Smit and Dafouz (2012: 4) underscore: "In other words, the defining criteria for EMI and ICL depend strongly on the general research focus adopted." The present article deals with the teaching and learning of mathematics and physics through English at school and at university in order to understand both subjects through a common denominator based on the fact they are among the most used subjects when the vehicular language is English ([https://selda.unicatt.it/milano-AZIONI\\_A\\_SUPPORTO\\_DELLA\\_METODOLOGIA\\_CLIL\\_NEI\\_LICEI\\_LINGUISTICI.\\_ANNO\\_SCOLASTICO\\_20142015.\\_RAPPORTO\\_FINALE.pdf](https://selda.unicatt.it/milano-AZIONI_A_SUPPORTO_DELLA_METODOLOGIA_CLIL_NEI_LICEI_LINGUISTICI._ANNO_SCOLASTICO_20142015._RAPPORTO_FINALE.pdf); Author *et al.* 2017).

Obviously, the two contexts (school and university) are different, also in terms of the teachers and lecturers belonging to each level. For example, regarding teachers: "Thus, while the latter are primarily identified as teachers, and generally receive pedagogical education in preparation for that profession, the former are largely defined according to their role as researchers, which is also reflected in the fact that tertiary teaching staff seldom obtain any substantial pedagogical training" (Smit and Dafouz, 2012: 3). Similarly, the students are different in that those at secondary school must surely be guided and are less independent in their learning, while at university they must be more independent and more responsible for their learning process.

## Methodology

The study relies mainly on a qualitative paradigm (Marshall and Rossman, 1994) with some elements of quantitative analysis and aims at investigating the link in terms of continuity/discontinuity between the teaching and learning of maths and physics through English at secondary school and university.

The intention was to undertake an explorative study to investigate the perceptions of the main actors (teachers, lecturers and students). The most qualitative part of the study comes from the analysis of the focus group of the lecturers/teachers and was chosen in order to gain richness of data. The smaller, quantitative part of the research uses a student very short questionnaire with three closed questions in order to gain as much data as possible in a short space of time.

To examine the teaching perspective in terms of continuity/discontinuity, it was decided to create a focus group with 30 maths and physics teachers taking a CLIL training course (delivered by an English language specialist) and two volunteering lecturers from the Faculty of Mathematics and Physics, where English is the medium of instruction. Two sub-focus groups were formed by separating the maths teachers from the physics teachers; each group was joined by the lecturers from the same subject area. The aim of these groups was to discuss the perception of the experience of teaching a content through English by the participants from the point of view of the continuity/discontinuity between the two levels. The groups met once for about one hour in the presence of a researcher who managed the protocol. The activities of the groups were recorded and transcribed by a second researcher in order to enhance interrater coding. The transcriptions were subsequently double-checked by a native speaker researcher.

To investigate learning in terms of continuity/discontinuity, a short questionnaire with three main questions was given to 135 students from the Faculty of Mathematics and Physics to understand their experience in learning content through English at both secondary school and university. Part of the reason for the questionnaire was to supplement the data from the focus groups, as well as to examine aspects that did not concern continuity (the latter findings are published elsewhere).

## A synoptic table of the research

Sample	Focus of the Research	Instruments and Methods	Aims
30 teachers 2 lecturers	Continuity/ Discontinuity Teaching	Focus group (qualitative)	Training/ Research
135 students	Continuity/ Discontinuity Learning	Short questionnaire (qualitative+ quantitative)	Research

Total anonymity and confidentiality (gender, age) was guaranteed to all participants by adopting the BAAL guidelines ([https://baalweb.files.wordpress.com/2017/08/goodpractice\\_full.pdf](https://baalweb.files.wordpress.com/2017/08/goodpractice_full.pdf)).

## Instruments

There were two tools of analysis: the protocol of the focus group and the short questionnaire. The former was created based on the thematic areas of interest in the literature and in part using ad hoc categories. The protocol is divided into three main parts: students, lecturers and ways of doing it (see appendix). Within each thematic area additional themes were developed.

The student questionnaire (135 in number) was instead also used for another study; however, it included items tied to this study (see the part of the data analysis regarding the description of the questions). The questionnaire was authorised by the dean of the faculty and permissions were requested and granted.

## Sample

The sample of secondary school teachers (30 in number) was part of a CLIL training course at a Northern Italian university and included teachers of mathematics and physics. All the teachers in the training course participated in the focus group, which was carried out in English.

The two university teachers participating in the focus group both taught in the Faculty of Mathematics and Physics in a northern Italian university. To obtain the sample of lecturers, several faculty staff (those who taught in English) were asked if they were willing to take part in a focus group. Two volunteered.

There were 135 students belonging to a Faculty of Mathematics and Physics in the north of Italy in the student sample. To have access to them for administering the questionnaire, the dean of the faculty was asked to give his permission, which he did. The lecturers themselves (voluntarily) gave out the paper questionnaire to their students; the researcher then collected and tabulated the data.

## Analysis

### Analysis of the focus group

The focus group meeting was first recorded and then transcribed. Topic areas emerged from the transcription, which were subject to content analysis (Gillham, 2000); at the same time, several sample excerpts were cited verbatim. The three categories of protocol for the focus group – students, lecturers and ways of doing it – did not turn out to be useful for the data analysis. In fact, as is often the case with focus groups, the teachers' discourse contained digressions, making it fundamental to identify new topic areas which were shared by the participants. Therefore, the analysis will be described using the following categories: the link between language and content, continuity/discontinuity in student learning, and differences/similarities in teaching.

### Focus group – the link between content and language (English)

The first topic area analysed involves the perception of the teachers regarding the relation between language and content. In the following extract there is an exchange between teachers. At the beginning a university professor makes an interesting comment on the peculiarity of English as a "clear structured language". He also makes an epistemological and linguistic observation when he says that English is perfect for scientific subjects, in part because there are many cognates from Greek and Latin.

### Lecturer 2 – Characteristics of English

And also the language helps a lot because English is quite a clear structured language, so it helps in this way. Sometimes Italian is confusing. Because we use a lot of words and sentences and it's quite complicated, for say, quite simple things.

T: That's for the basic, of course if you want to go to the higher levels, you have to talk to a native language speaker. But it's not a case for – the scientific English is not that difficult. It's simpler than the literary language.

Yes because many words are of Greek or Latin origin...

T: Yeah, and for us in particular, and also the sentence construction is helping as well, to simplify things.

Another teacher from secondary school makes an interesting comment that mathematics is almost like a third language that, in some way, mediates between the L1 (Italian) and the L2 (English).

### Teacher 5 – lexis and mathematics as being the third language

There is an interesting thing, just to make this example, it is strange but in a sense when I teach in English, we have to do with 3 languages, 1, 2, and mathematics. Incredibly, but, mathematics works as a mediator between two languages.

Another secondary school teacher, speaking about the difficulties or aids for students, makes a comment strictly linked to his subject, stating that perhaps Maths is better suited as a subject to be taught in English because the concepts are all contained in the operations/formulas (in fact, Maths can be considered as a separate language), with only some terms changing. He says that if students have problems with understanding what the teacher is saying, they will not have any problem understanding what the teacher is writing on the blackboard implying that a double semiotic code might help. In fact, Maths teachers often write equations and methods for solving them while at the same time giving an explanation, in this way employing a dual input that can be of help to students.

### Teacher 2 – Mathematics

Maybe for mathematics it's easier, because you don't have to simplify the concepts, you can find everything... The language is more or less the same, there's not very much lexis to be used or translated, and it's quite simple because you can understand what they're saying. And then you have, I saw that, professors in mathematics are always right. So if they don't understand what you're saying they can always understand what you are writing, so it's easier, rather than in other subjects.

### Focus group – continuity/discontinuity in terms of students' learning

The second topic area refers to teachers' thinking about the continuity/discontinuity between the levels of education in terms of student learning.

A secondary school teacher noted, with regard to the advantages/disadvantages for students of learning through English, that this entails a slowing down of the learning process, which he sees as negative. At the same time, however, he provides a sort of solution, noting that if such an approach had begun in earlier years there might be more time to fully teach the topics.

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**Teacher 1 – time**

We teach the 5th year. Learning in English takes much more time, and this is absolutely a disadvantage for the students, I suppose. A big thing would be starting earlier with this experience.

Another secondary school teacher observed the different attitude of students when content is taught through English, at times going so far as to produce a dramatic change in the persona of students, in the sense that the change in the language of learning also leads to a change in identity. As a result, a student who is not good at Maths but is good at English will find the courage to speak, and vice-versa.

**Teacher 7 – students' identities**

What I could realize, very interesting in my opinion, is that some students – I notice how the behaviour of some students is different. For example, I have some students that are a sort of a leader normally when we speak in Italian. And making the lesson in English, they change completely the social position because some of them are good in speaking in English so they become a sort of leader... express themselves in different ways! I have a student who is normally timid and when we speak in English, they speak and interact normally, so they change completely habit.

A third teacher noted the greater degree of attention required when a subject is taught in English. He also stated that during the evaluation phase the answers were better in English than they were in Italian.

**Teacher 6 – attention**

OK well... another benefit I think it is that they are obliged to reflect both on the language and on the content, because when they read in Italian, they don't think of the content and they don't pay attention. And the last assessment activity, the answers in English were better than the ones in Italian.

**Focus group – continuity/discontinuity in terms of teaching**

The second topic area is linked to differences and similarities in teaching.

In this regard, one university teacher stated that, in his opinion, work at secondary school becomes more complicated since there are not only gifted Maths students but non-gifted ones as well, whereas at university only the gifted students would enrol in that subject.

**Lecturer 1 – differences**

I mean, students that studied for their own choice mathematics, are gifted in mathematics, and so at least that's the better thing possible... and so in my opinion, in my view, it would be simpler to teach at university.

In this case the teacher believes that whether the book used is in English or Italian is irrelevant, since the objective is to learn the content. What is important is knowing the concepts, after which the language these are expressed in must be interchangeable.

**Teacher 3 – textbooks and input in Italian/English**

They are two very different things, and the other thing that I think is really important is that our students in my opinion have to achieve knowledge either in English or in Italian. So, I don't need to be so strict to have an English textbook.

If they have got an Italian text, it is, they can compare, as I have already said, it is important to make comparison, and they must be able to speak also in Italian about the topics they have encountered in their studies. Maybe there comes another engineer or technician, and they have to relate with people that are speaking Italian and not English every time.

Another university teacher commented on his desire for students to interact more, even though this does not appear possible to him due to student resistance. He believes this situation is particularly serious during the first years of university when, due to the low level of interaction, the teacher cannot tell whether students have understood what he is teaching or not.

**Lecturer 2 – interaction**

I tried once or twice to have university lessons, and it was very, very difficult to say something and get some concepts having no answer [...] I am used to interacting with the students. This is a problem [...] Especially when they are not so young. During the first year when they are almost high school students... it is impossible to understand if they understand. This is a problem, especially for mathematics.

The following teacher spoke about methodology, commenting on the extent to which CLIL methodology (more interactive) and traditional methodology can be combined in Italian schools, and on the fact that some topics are better suited for treatment through CLIL while others are more suitable to more traditional methods.

**Teacher 4 – CLIL methodology**

I think that it depends on the topic that you are dealing with because traditional methodology and CLIL methodology complete each other and there are topics which can be better treated with the traditional methodology and other ones which must be treated, can be treated with better results... using the CLIL methodology. I think that every teacher should balance these two options and choose every time the right one.

**Analysis of the student short questionnaire**

The answers to the three questions were analysed using a quantitative approach, with a statistical description of the results provided. Only valid percentages are here described.

The majority of students answering the questionnaire came from the mathematics faculty (65.2%), with 34.8% coming from the physics faculty (valid percent).

The first question they were asked was whether or not they had had previous CLIL experience during level II secondary school: "Have you ever taken courses given entirely or partly in English?". Slightly more than half the students (51.9%) had had a previous CLIL experience, while the remaining 48.1% had not (valid percent).

When asked to evaluate the CLIL experience with the question: "How would you assess the effectiveness of any courses you have taken which were given in English?", a fair number of students (43.1%) said it was a good experience. If we add to this those students (38.5%) who said it was all right, the result can be seen as reflecting a generally positive attitude. Very few (3%) stated it was a negative experience, only 6.2% said it was excellent, and 9.2% that it was passable.

Finally, students were asked if they would do other courses in the future taught in English ("Are you interested in disciplinary courses taught through English?"). The question here is closely connected to the preceding one. If students had a positive experience, they might be prone to doing it again. In fact, a large majority of students expressed interest in doing another CLIL course (valid percent: 78.9% yes, 21.1% no).

## Reflection

The aim of the study was twofold: to describe an activity in a CLIL training course and to focus on both the continuity and discontinuity between transitions in education and on the link between two contexts (level II secondary school and university) within the fields of mathematics and physics when taught through English. This link was analysed from the point of view of the lecturers/teachers (focus group) and that of the students (short questionnaire).

One thing that stood out was the similarity of views and the high level of agreement between secondary school and university lecturers regarding the key issues in teaching content through English. There was also significant mutual respect and esteem for their relative roles and jobs. The responses of students were a little more varied. All parties appreciated this type of study because it was an opportunity to exchange ideas and impressions.

In terms of the first research question examined with the focus groups, there was above all a difference between the two disciplines since mathematics has more unique aspects such as its own code. In fact, maths emerged as a language in its own right. Also noted was the importance of multiple codes (written-oral), which in this case is strictly linked to the subject (maths is explained through equations). Moreover, maths was also seen as a third language mediating between Italian and English. When one has difficulty with one or the other, the code intervenes as a support.

The teachers and lecturers in the focus group also displayed an interest in the language, often making linguistic comments, for example, on how English is well-suited to scientific thinking and procedures, since it is simple and clear. They even mentioned that Italian can at times be misleading.

When the topic turned to student learning (from the teachers' perspective), the comments focused on the perception of a shift in the students' personae when another language is used to present content. In this sense, the students can be exposed to new learning methods, and those who are less skilled in English but more so in maths/physics, and vice-versa, can nevertheless gain advantages (see Hüttner, Dalton-Puffer and Smit, 2013 on the question of teacher identity). Moreover, it was noted that the fact that content was presented in another language resulted in the students being more attentive; in the view of one teacher, students also performed better during their assessments (see also Costa and Mariotti, 2017).

Regarding the differences/similarities in teaching, the teachers agreed on the importance of providing the basic knowledge and content in a manner that allows these elements to be handled in any language. In addition, there was agreement on the need for a balance between traditional and innovative methods in order to reach all types of students.

There was general agreement and few differences regarding the two educational transitions. The areas of discontinuity concerned the difference between students at the level II secondary school and those at university: in universities, students are seen as more motivated. Therefore, in the level II secondary school the teacher has to be better at gaining the interest of and teaching all students. Moreover, students at university interact very little also because of large classes, which is seen as a big problem; therefore, future policy-makers could see interaction as an area of improvement through intra-educational work.

The second research question is more closely linked to the students' perception, and the analysis of the short questionnaires brought out the following issues. Most students appreciated the CLIL experience in the level II secondary schools, and perhaps this explains their interest in doing courses with English as the language of instruction at university.

One of the aims of the present study was to describe a CLIL teacher training course showing the type of activities which can be carried out by a language specialist trainer in order to raise awareness of the importance of the language aspect in CLIL-like teaching. The instrument described in this paper is the focus group, which turned out to be a powerful and effective tool for such training. The limitation of this purely explorative study is that it is mainly qualitative in nature. Therefore, the results can be valid only for this specific study and cannot be generalized (Schostak 2002). Nevertheless, the analysis of the context was very detailed, since the fundamental actors in terms of continuity between level II secondary school and university were involved during the teacher training course. As a result, similar studies in similar contexts in other regions in Italy, and concerning other subjects, could be very interesting, together with providing a highly in-depth overall view of the topic. As Macaro (2018: 124-125) points out: "This compartmentalization of education research, while understandable from a practical perspective, is quite unhelpful from the perspective of truly understanding the challenges that students face as they move not only from one institution to another but from one pedagogic environment to another".

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## Appendix

### Group Discussion (Mathematics And Physics)

#### Introducing participants and protocol

##### Students

Let's start talking about benefits and drawbacks for the students, if any, that you see in teaching your subject-matters through English.

Along the same lines what kind of connections can you see between the last year of schooling and higher education? What about job opportunities for students? What are your reciprocal expectations?

What do you think of the concept of English as being a *commodity*?

##### Teachers

In terms of teachers' choice. Do you see this type of teaching as some kind of professional development? Are there differences between school teachers and university teachers?

Why did you undertake this type of teaching? Are there differences between school teachers and university teachers? Has your way of teaching turned into a more anglosaxon way?

What is your relationship with foreign languages?

Do you see this type of teaching as an opportunity to improve your English?

##### Ways of doing it...

What is peculiar to your subject-matter when it is taught through English? Are there common features between school teachers and university teachers?

What about materials? Which ones do you use/are they easily found?

Do you pay any attention to language? Moments in which you focus on language (pronunciation, lexis, grammar?). Reading scientific papers? Writing lab reports?

Do you use the mother tongue? When and why?

Anything else?

## The Author



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# A collaborative action research project

By Jaber Kamali, Iran

## Introduction

I am an instructor at Farhangian University, a specialized university for teacher education run by Iran's education ministry. I teach TEFL courses to undergraduate students who are going to be teachers. Below, I would like to share my experience of the Action Research course I taught in the first 2018-2019 semester to student teachers, who were juniors i.e. in their second year at the time.

I think AR is a way of promoting discovery learning. If we, as teacher trainers, help our teachers to be autonomous and try to show them how to find answers to their own action research question, we have taught them how to find the answer to all their questions. To me, encouraging teachers to be autonomous is the first step to revolutionizing student learning.

## Action Research

Action research (henceforth AR) is a part of 'a quiet methodological revolution' towards qualitative research approaches (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998: vii) that has had an influential effect on the social sciences since 1950 and emerged in reaction to quantitative paradigms. The roots of the movement towards this participative approach can be found in philosophical developments in humanistic psychology (Rogers, 1961), social phenomenology (Schutz, 1967), critical theory (Foucault, 1970), liberationist education (Freire, 1970), and feminist studies (Lichtenstein, 1988).

## The course

I started the course in session one with an introduction to AR and asked 5 groups to present different chapters of the book entitled *Doing action research in English language teaching: a guide for practitioners* (Burns, 2010). This book was provided for the student teachers from session one as a part of their assignments to study at home and present its chapters in the class.

From session two onwards, each of the five groups presented a different chapter at the beginning of the session. After each presentation, I ran a discussion on issues arising from it. The book included 5 chapters: 1) Introduction 2) Plan 3) Action 4) Observation 5) Reflection. Some issues were raised by the student teachers and they were discussed. The seventh session was my turn to review the whole theoretical underpinning of AR by way of a state-of-the-art article (Burns, 2005).

From session eight onwards, a problem-solving approach was used. The student teachers, who had been thinking about a practical problem they had faced in their classes since the beginning of the semester, started to work on it. We used Kemmis and McTaggart's (1988) model which considers four stages of action research, namely plan, action, observation, and reflection. In the eighth session, the 'plan' stage of the AR was discussed, and the groups argued about what plan they had for their own AR and what steps they wanted to take to solve their problems. The following topics emerged from the discussion of possible problems or puzzles:

- Reducing the Foreign Language Anxiety of Junior High School Students
- Creating a More Participating Environment in Free Discussion Classes
- How to Ensure Student Engagement and its Impact on Student Learning
- Extrinsic Motivation and Young Learners
- Disruptive Students: What is the Right Action?

In sessions eight and nine, the student teachers presented their 'Plan' section and received feedback from me and from peers based on which they modified their 'Action' phase.

Between sessions nine and 11, the student teachers conducted their research and then reported back on it for the class. Some modifications to their plans based on the comments were applied.

In session 12, they reported back on the 'Observation' phase in which they observed the procedure of AR and the actions they took and the results, without any interpretation, were reported.

In session 13, there was a reflection phase in which the student teachers reported their data and expressed their interpretation of the gathered data. For example, one group argued that "using humor and kindness in the classroom is genuinely effective". This idea was extracted from the data, which was an interview in their AR which they had analyzed. In this reflective session, some of these interpretations were modified.

Session 14 was used for preparing a poster using the template I provided for the student teachers and the final comments were given by me, and the other classmates.

Session 15 of the term was a poster presentation session in which other students and some other professors of Farhangian University attended to look at the posters and ask questions about the projects. This was also considered part of the reflection phase of AR.

## Student feedback on the course

The term ended with my asking the student teachers for anonymous feedback on the course by writing about their experience of the course in the google form.

All the participating teachers considered it successful in which they had learnt how to do a practical research and find the answer to their own questions.

For example, one of the student teachers said:

'Honestly, it was an amazing experience for me. Although it demanded lots of time, energy and also working professionally and accurately, I learned how to become a knowledgeable teacher and be more curious about all aspects of my teaching.'

In addition, some constructs emerged from the feedback, constructs such as, 'new experience', 'critical thinking', 'facing challenges instead of avoiding them', 'practice-oriented', and 'learners' voices.

continued >>>

For example, one of the student teachers said:

'This semester was a *new experience* for me. Learning about action research, I found out the differences between my own idealistic expectations and the real difficulties. This is gonna help me to plan my actions a lot more *practical*.'

Another teacher stated that:

'It was very nice that we had a chance to work on this project. I think this course can help us to *think critically* and do our best to have better situation in our classes.'

This indicates, I believe, that "critical thinking", the entity which oriental education sometimes misses out, could be practiced with AR.

Another construct emerging from the student teachers' feedback sentences is "facing challenges instead of avoiding them". This is evident in the next extract from one of the student teachers:

'Avoiding problems rather than solving them does not pave the way for improvement and sophistication. I'll see problems and tiny failures as steps toward success. Thank you for creating such an insight for me into the problems that I'll definitely encounter.'

I think this AR project has taught some student teachers a philosophy in life which is *success is impossible without failure*.

The last construct that emerged and which I would like to focus on is "learners' voices" which is evident in the next extract.

'As far as I remember the first time that student's thoughts, ideas and interpretations were regarded highly valuable was in your class. You taught how to think bigger than what we do now.'

## Conclusion

My experience of running this course confirmed my belief in the practicality of AR. I believe it can be employed as a remedy for the research/practice dichotomy and the hegemony of researchers over practitioners (Maley, 2016). It can also add to the body of research and practice in the "teacher as researcher" (Wallace, 1991, p.56) movement in which teachers can "theorize from their practice and practice what they theorize" (Kumaravadivelu, 2001, p.541).

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# Humanising an authoritarian lecture theatre

By Mario Rinvoluceri, UK

I was invited in October 2019 to do a two-hour plenary session for the teachers of Spanish across a range of North African countries from Mauritania in the South West round to Tunisia in the East. All these colleagues taught for the Instituto Cervantes, an organisation similar to the Goethe Institut, the Confucius Institutes (500 in the USA) or the British Council.

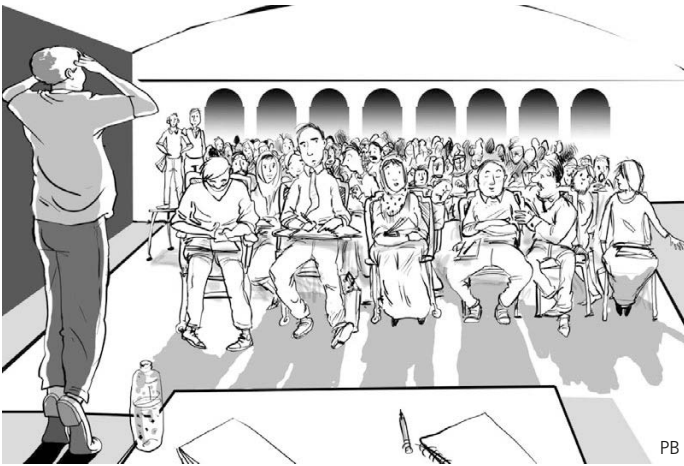
My brief from my hosts was to introduce person-centred techniques to stimulate creative writing.

This work was to be done in a magnificent lecture theatre (La Salle Rouge) in the National Library of Algiers.

It had some of the most comfortable, red armchairs I have ever seen in such a room. The hall could hold 500 people. As it was not raked the people in the back row seemed a very long way away.

At the front of the theatre there was a dais topped by a massive long table. The table was equipped with four microphones. On the first morning the President of the Royal Academy of Spain, had given a welcoming plenary and the architecture of the hall purred with pleasure at being the environment for a genuinely powerful and cultivated international intellectual with fascinating content. Thrilling.





My job, I felt, was to show the mainly Arab teachers a radically different view of education, one in which the learner is not seen as an empty vessel to be filled (as is usually the case with a formal lecture). And yet the architecture was stacked against such an endeavour.

I made it my business to get the technician on my side. He checked the 4 dais mics were actually working. He conjured up a portable mic for me to use. Hurray, I had mobility around the vast area of the hall.

I asked four participants, fairly senior ones, three of whom I had already had some good contact with, to occupy four chairs behind the massive table of authority.

The first exercise was a group mirroring exercise. The whole audience of maybe 130 people were asked to stand and imitate my voice and my gestures as I praised the beauty of an imaginary rose, which I then picked. (This exercise comes from the work of Bernard Dufeu, developer of language psychodramaturgy)

I then asked people to turn to their neighbours and feedback on what they had just done.

I rounded off the feedback session by asking the four people on the dais to share their thoughts with the whole hall via their powerful microphones.

I do not want to take you through all the writing exercises we did that morning as nearly all the women in the group began to join in and at least half the men hiding in the back rows began to lustily take an active part in the work.

When my hostess indicated that we only had eight minutes left before lunch I simply turned to the dais colleagues and asked them to take two minutes each to round off the session with their, feelings, opinions and evaluations.

During this time, I was mostly out of sight and the audience clapped the four dais people.

I felt that the architecture had somehow noticed what was happening and kind of joined in the spirit of that morning.

PS When people are completely new to humanistic thinking it takes more than a morning to train them and to deal with the well anchored belief systems they bring from their own days as pupils,

PPS !Gracias a Vds todos por haber aguantado con tanta paciencia este viejo medio loco!

(Thanks to all of you participants for having put up so patiently with this half-mad old man!)

## The Author



Mario is a Pilgrims and Bridge Associate. He wonders if other teacher trainers have stories about fighting architecture? Email: [mario.rinolucricri7@gmail.com](mailto:mario.rinolucricri7@gmail.com)

# 'Treasure hunting': Combining English learning with teacher training

By Andrew Griffiths, South Korea

## Introduction

Many ELT teacher training programs, especially in East Asia, place emphasis on improving teacher trainees' English language skills as well as their ability to teach English (Hanington & Pillai, 2016). This article will describe an activity which successfully blends both aspects. It was designed to utilize the limited time I had in class more successfully and to allow my teacher trainees more ownership of the learning process, while also giving them a chance to learn and use vocabulary that was relevant and useful to them.

## The educational context

The activity took place on an English course for in-service Korean state school teachers. The course was divided into two sections, one focusing on improving the trainees' English proficiency, the other on improving their skills as teachers of English. Most of the trainees rated as B2 / C1 on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages or CEFR. (Council of Europe, 2019).

While teaching the trainees in the English language sessions, I noticed that many trainees consistently internalized certain items of new lexis rather than other items.

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For example, I might teach the word 'aspirations' but would find that most trainees wouldn't use the word when presented with an opportunity to do so. On the other hand, items like 'bend over backwards' enjoyed great popularity, not least because many teachers enjoyed using it to describe their efforts when trying to work with difficult students!

I reached the conclusion that teaching pre-determined lexis to the trainees was inefficient. While some of the words were clearly useful and relevant to them, others were clearly not. I theorized that if they could personally choose what language items they learned, this might be more congruent with their unique needs as learners and might result in higher output of the language items. I subsequently created an activity that allowed them to do this. I named it 'Treasure Hunting'.

## 'Treasure Hunting'

### Stage One

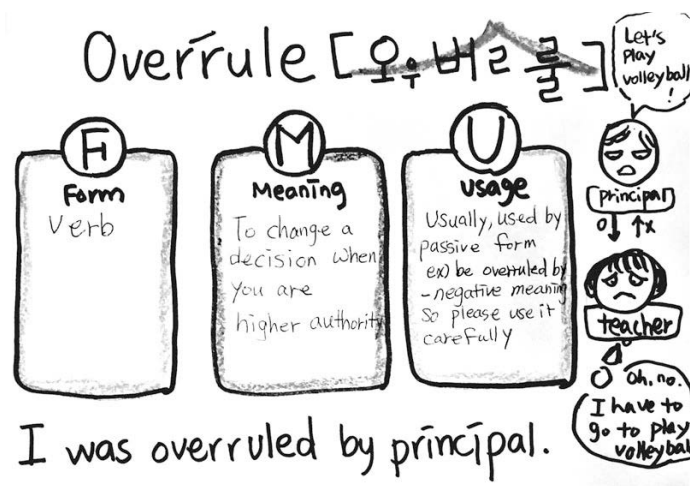
The activity was broken down into several stages and took place over several lessons. In stage one, trainees were given a broad topic – for example, 'life at school' – and asked to provide some subheadings for that topic. Examples included 'relationships with other staff', and 'things we like about teaching'. Having trainees provide the subheadings was an early demonstration of their right to have ownership of the learning process. Stage one lasted around 10 minutes.

### Stage Two

In stage two, trainees sat in groups around a piece of paper that contained all the subheadings from stage one along with prompts for speaking, such as 'Ask another group member what they think', and 'Running out of ideas? Change the subject'. I asked trainees to start talking about the topic, with them choosing which subheadings they focused on. This stage often lasted an hour or more. In most cases, trainee talk flowed easily, moving from subheading to subheading with a minimum of input from me.

The purpose of stage two was to allow the group members to speak extensively on the wider topic and, most critically, to find what language they didn't know regarding that topic. For example:

**Trainee 1:** Yeah, I mean the biggest problem is when you make a plan but suddenly the principal changes it.



**Trainee 2:** Yeah, when you think it is all decided but then suddenly you are jibaehae – I don't know the word in English – ah, mwoji?

These 'mwoji moments' – where trainees wanted to say a word in English, but only knew the Korean ('mwoji' being the Korean for 'What is it?') – formed the basis of the lexis that would later be learned and taught. When a group had a 'mwoji moment', they would either use me or a dictionary to find the right word in English. This word would then be written down. In the case of the above 'mwoji moment', my questioning and the provision of examples established that the word *overruled* fitted the Korean lexical item *jibaehae* most closely.

I referred to these new English words as 'treasures' (hence 'Treasure hunting') as these were words the trainees had wanted to use, but couldn't, and which would therefore hopefully be valuable to them in the future. By framing the activity as a treasure hunt, trainees felt as if they were indeed searching their own brains for the 'treasure' that they hadn't yet discovered as learners.

### Stage Three

By the start of stage three, each group had a number of lexical 'treasures'. I then asked each group to select one of their 'treasures' to share with the other groups. I asked them to think about which lexical item would be most relevant and most useful for the others. It was at this stage that their focus switched from being learners of English to being teachers of English, as they were required to focus on the needs of their future learners – that is, their peers. In the case of the above dialogue, the group selected their new-found English word *overrule* as being the most useful treasure they had found. This stage took around 10 minutes.

### Stage Four

In stage four, each group was tasked with planning how to teach this lexical item to the other groups. It was stressed that they, not I, would be responsible for teaching this new word to their peers. The first step was to prepare teaching materials that would enable them to do this. This stage took around two hours to complete. Each group was directed to base their materials around the framework of 'Meaning-Form-Use' (Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 1999), along with an example sentence and any relevant collocations found in corpora. This stage enabled the trainees to improve their ability to teach vocabulary effectively, as many were unfamiliar with the framework and with using corpora to find collocations. However, the stage still allowed scope for extensive speaking, as the act of creating materials in a group required extensive discussion and negotiation with one another. The group above, armed with their new lexical treasure *overrule*, created a 'treasure card' – a small, A4-sized display with the form, meaning, use, and collocations of the word as well as a small illustration to show the meaning.

### Stage Five

Stage five, which lasted around one hour, saw the final and most critical element of the activity. Each group was split up and trainees reassembled into another group, where they taught their lexis and, in turn, were taught the lexis that other groups had found.

Each trainee was directed to make their peers fluent in their lexical treasures – therefore requiring presentation of the target lexis, a detailed explanation of it using the Meaning-Form-Use framework, controlled practice and finally free production – along with time for error corrections and clarifications of confusing aspects of the material. Each trainee was cast as an expert in their item of treasure, and in turn was then cast as a learner given the opportunity to become fully fluent in their peers' lexical treasures. This stage was thus an opportunity for the trainees to practice and improve their skills as teachers as well as being a chance for them to experience vocabulary learning from a student's perspective.

During this stage I monitored and assisted where necessary, but the primary responsibility for the success of the task lay with the trainees – a responsibility which in most cases they came to relish and enjoy.

### Final Stages

At the conclusion of the activity, I reviewed key points about the new 'treasure' in a whole class activity, drawing attention to any remaining errors or any other relevant information that had hitherto been unaddressed. Once stage five was finished, I put the new lexis on the class 'treasure board' and carried out further activities to utilize and consolidate this new lexis.

### Trainee Reactions: Successes and Challenges

I observed the trainees while they were doing the activity and also conducted research regarding the successes and challenges of the activity at the end of the course. In my observations, I noticed that trainees' spoken fluency improved, no doubt from the sheer amount of speaking that they had to do – between four and five hours each time the activity took place. Furthermore, I noticed that the active engagement of the trainees in their learning was considerably higher than when I had taught them pre-determined lexis. This was clarified in my research, where many trainees stated that their ownership of the learning content had been greatly welcomed and that the heightened responsibility for teaching their peers had spurred them to teach to the highest standard possible. This, in turn, created a visible outcome which I noted in my classes – that the trainees actually used the lexis they generated considerably more than they used vocabulary 'learned' from a textbook. Many trainees echoed this observation by noting that they perceived the lexis as being highly relevant to their experiences and useful to their needs as learners.

However, the activity did throw up several challenges. The first was that the extensive speaking during the activity necessarily had to focus on fluency rather than accuracy, as drawing attention to errors in accuracy would have distracted from the actual task of finding and teaching treasure. It was also not possible to learn or teach a large amount of lexis in the activity – one or two 'treasures' per group was the largest amount possible. Furthermore, despite most trainees enjoying the activity a great deal, a few less confident trainees were reticent at the beginning about being given such heavy responsibility for teaching their peers. Most, however, found their feet quickly, and by the end of the course expressed their satisfaction at having participated in the activity. Overall, trainees reported high satisfaction at having partaken in the activity.

### Advice for implementing 'Treasure Hunting' in your training class

Implementing 'Treasure Hunting' was simple in terms of materials preparation and planning. However, I would encourage any trainers wishing to carry out this activity to do the following:

- Beforehand, be transparent with trainees about how the activity will most likely be considerably different to how they have learned lexis beforehand. In my experience, trainees were willing to accept the challenge for their benefit as learners and as teachers.
- During the activity, make sure you have enough time to sufficiently monitor and assist the trainees – I was considerably busier assisting multiple groups dealing with different ideas (and questions arising thereafter) than I would have been if I had merely been teaching pre-determined lexis.
- Post-activity, elicit and listen to feedback from each individual trainee about how they felt about the activity. Feedback received in early incarnations of the activity improved the way I delivered the activity in subsequent courses.

### Conclusion

My aims for this activity were both pragmatic and idealistic – to use the time available for training more usefully as well as to allow trainees the chance to gain more ownership of their learning and to learn more relevant and useful content. These aims seem to have been roundly achieved.

There are still ways in which this activity can be improved. I would welcome advice from other trainers who have tried similar activities in their classrooms and would especially welcome feedback from any teacher trainers who try this activity out and give their trainees a chance to find and share their own 'treasures'.

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# 'Procrustes' bed' and the language teacher training classroom

By Jaber Kamali, Iran

## Introduction

Procrustes, was an infamous robber in Greek mythology. He lived in Attica, a historical region encompassing the city of Athens. He is said to have attacked people, making his victims fit his iron bed by stretching them, if they were too short, or cutting their limbs off, if they were too tall. The expression, a 'Procrustean bed' has thus come to mean an arbitrary standard to which exact conformity is forced.

What does this expression have to do with teacher training? Well, having observed a lot of observer-teacher feedback sessions in Iran, I have come to the conclusion that we, as observers, tend, very strictly, to dictate some techniques to the teachers we observe and do not leave any room for the teachers' explanations to justify their own actions. And if we do so, we mostly do not accept the explanations but insist instead on our own ideas which might or might not be right for the teacher, the class or the lesson. This article criticizes such a one-size-fits-all approach and suggests ways of avoiding it



## Why is procrustean observation a trend in Iran?

There are various reasons why this is a very popular trend for language teaching supervisors in their observation feedback sessions here. First, it is easier for the observer to conduct a session in which the observer talks and the observee simply listens and takes notes. The observer is not asked for the rationale for their beliefs and is not requested to provide a remedy. Secondly, the observers have been required to learn a set of rules and it is only those rules that are discussed. Thus, supervisors always work within their comfort zone and nobody takes them out of it. Third, the session does not need any higher order thinking skills like analysis, critical thinking, problem solving or evaluation from either party.

## Examples of procrustean feedback language

Here are some examples of procrustean language in observation feedback sessions.

### Extract 1

'You talked a lot in this session. Around 24 minutes you talked and it means students didn't have enough time to talk in the class.'

Here the observer has not considered the context. Balanced TTT (Teacher Talking Time) is "where language use and pedagogic purpose coincide, (and) learning opportunities are facilitated" (Walsh, 2002, p. 5). However, it is evident in the observer comment above that no room has been given for analyzing the *pedagogic purpose* and that this is a treatment the observer prescribes for all the cases.

### Extract 2

'You should first give examples to students and then write the rule of the past perfect on the board.'

This comment does not leave any room for explanation by the teacher of why they did what they did. Sometimes, in post observation feedback sessions, observers run a monologic session in which the only speaker is the observer. We should bear in mind that we, as observers, observe an excerpt of the class and are not familiar with the students' background, needs, and wants.

## How to avoid being procrustean

Below are my tips on how to avoid a one size fits all approach to observation and feedback.

### Be an active listener

In active listening the listener fully concentrates on what is being said rather than just passively *hearing* it. Listening attentively and reacting based on the previous turn in a discussion is one way of escaping being procrustean.

### Manage your comments in the form of a question

A technique by which we can take a more liberal approach to feedback is by asking open questions about the class to find out more instead of commenting without hearing the observee's explanations. For example, we can ask, "What would be the advantages of not correcting every mistake?" instead of, "You shouldn't correct all the mistakes" or ask, "How could you encourage the learners to contribute more?" Instead of, "Praise the learners".

### Read a lot

The maxim, "*Do not insist on your belief unless you have read at least 10 books against it*" is, I think, a very useful one. Kruger & Dunning (1999) state that,

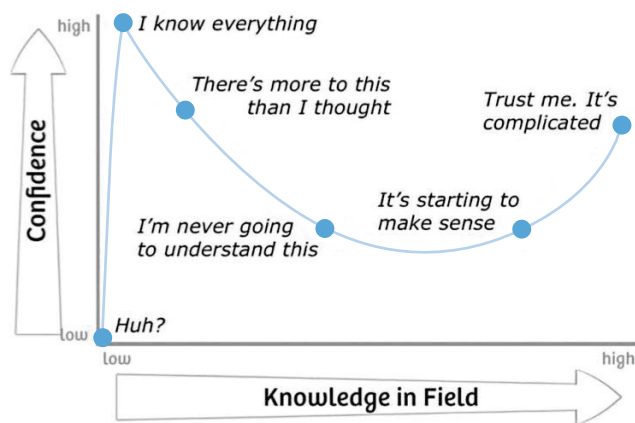


Figure 1. Dunning-Kruger graph (<https://www.thedailystar.net>)

'...when people are incompetent in the strategies they adopt to achieve success and satisfaction, they suffer a dual burden: Not only do they reach erroneous conclusions and make unfortunate choices, but their incompetence robs them of the ability to realize it (p. 1121).

The Dunning-Kruger effect, therefore, argues that people with little knowledge of a field mistakenly assess their cognitive ability as greater than it is. So, they are hyper-confident about what they think they know. One of the ways to avoid this is through reading a lot. In the Dunning-Kruger graph above (Figure 1), the level of confidence experiences a downward trend until a person gains enough knowledge to realise that the topic, now mostly understood, is much more complex than they had at first thought. The reflective individual who has gained confidence by reading still has lower confidence than when a novice.

## Be observed

One of the best ways of avoiding being Procrustean is by tasting your own medicine. Ask teachers to observe your class and to give you feedback. This will make you aware of what is loved and hated by your observees in feedback sessions.

We can also ask colleagues to observe our own feedback sessions to find out more about ourselves. For instance, once a colleague observed my feedback session and made me aware of my sitting position which was very bossy in the session. I would never have noticed this if he had not pointed it out.

The Johari window (Luft & Ingham, 1955) above helps us better understand our relationship with ourselves and what we know. What we can learn from asking others to observe our briefing sessions is more about our blind self, (What is known to others but unknown to us)

## Observe other observers' feedback sessions

Observing other supervisors' briefing sessions can help us be more reflective about what we do. From observing the experienced ones, we may learn good practice and from the less experienced, we will probably learn enthusiasm and motivation. We can even learn from bad practice by taking an anti-model approach and deliberately not doing what we have seen done.

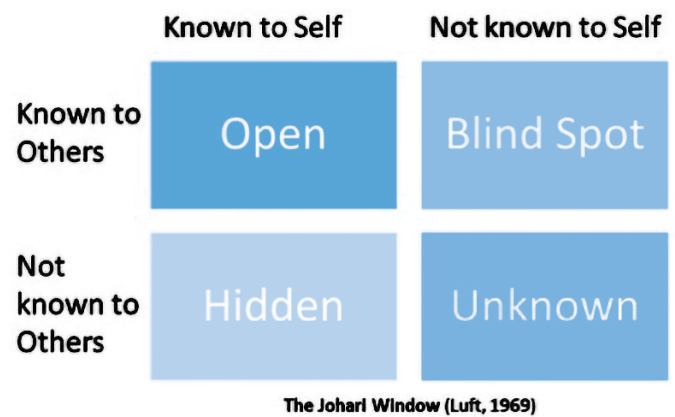


Figure 2. Johari window (<https://medium.com>)

## Have a dialogue with the observed teacher

Engaging in real dialogue in a feedback session can be the best way to avoid being procrustean. What happens in dialogue is interaction and collaboration. We can learn about the reasons and rationales for teacher action.

## Conclusion

I hope we can all become more aware of the procrustean view and avoid it in our own observation feedback sessions. What do you think? Are you a procrustean observer? If so, how do you think you can you avoid it?

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# Training new teachers on the three commandments of teaching high level students

By Brandon G. Morgan, Spain

I am the co-founder of a language school in North West Spain. I always ask the same question of new teachers after they have taught their first few classes, "How was it?" And I usually receive the same simple answer, "It was great. I think it went well." So, when one of the trainees in my newest cohort of teachers came out of his classroom on his first day pale-faced and petrified, I was not entirely sure what could have happened. After delivering my question, I was not quite expecting the response I received. "I don't know what I can teach them. They are just too good. They are better than ME!"

It seems to be an industry badge of honor to say that you are in charge of the C1-C2 students, (Proficient users in the Common European Framework of Reference). And I was never entirely sure why. I have always seen such value in teachers who were able to coach the lowest students who could literally say nothing much in English into people who were able to communicate in the language. This was true transformation, I thought. I just never saw difficulty in teaching higher levels, and this is potentially quite the calamity.

The fact is that, after being the owner of a 900+ student language school for more than 8 years, I know my data. There are two groups who are at highest risk of withdrawing from English language classes, and high-level students are one of them. Therefore, it is essential that as teacher trainers we know the teacher strategies which keep high level students enrolled and learning in courses, and it is our responsibility to help new teachers develop these skills. They will have a direct impact on enrollment and, more importantly, on academic success. So, here are the strategies that I believe you need to train.

## The three commandments of teaching high level students

### Commandment 1: I will model appropriate lexical items and grammatical structures that students can use.

It is not enough to give an advanced class in an easy conversational register. In high level groups it is essential that the teacher uses a full range of normal English in order to provide a model of proficient, educated and idiomatic English for students. Where appropriate and natural, teachers can introduce particular idiomatic expressions and replace easy generic words with more expressive or detailed words. Thus not so much 'She walked to the shops' but rather, 'She strolled, nipped/hurried to the shops'. Teachers are truly the resource for students, and if a student says "Wow!" or "What was that again?" when presented with new language elements they can use, the teacher is getting things right.

Another example of this might be this interaction:

**Teacher:** How was that activity? Was it hard?

**Students:** Yes!

**Teacher:** Yes! It was hard. And *complicated*. And maybe even *arduous*.

Of course, in communicative language classes, teachers are facilitators; however, it truly is a missed opportunity for teachers not to also be a source of knowledge. Students will appreciate this and happily write down the suggestions provided. This helps high level students feel they are progressing while constantly exposing them to language that pushes them to improve.

### Commandment 2: I will ask students to provide substitutions for low-level vocabulary that they use and provide additional examples.

Constantly challenging and pushing students at this level is essential. Therefore, teachers should also use every opportunity to take their students' language farther. This means, that as a teacher moves around to provide feedback during a communicative activity of writing or speaking, they should make sure to notice when a student is using a simple word. At that moment, they should ask them to provide suggestions to change it. This might look like this:

**Student:** I really like going to the beach.

**Teacher:** That's excellent. Can you tell me again using a better word than "like"?

**Student:** Enjoy?

**Teacher:** Excellent! Another?

**Student:** Fond of...

**Teacher:** Yes, you also might say You might even say that you are a *huge fan of traveling to the coast*.

**Student:** Oooo! Yes! -student writes down suggestion-

By constantly employing this technique, students will learn to select their words, rather than just choosing the first ones that come to mind. This mental game will require them to think. In this way, they will not just acquire useful and expressive language but truly notice that they are learning.

### Commandment 3: I will always maintain high expectations, even when student work is already good.

I always say that the biggest hurdle is attitude. Teachers must attack high level classes from a different perspective than other levels. When students are beginning to study English, they need love, care, and support. I would dare to say, however, that high level students need the opposite. They need tough love and high expectations. To achieve this, teachers need to have an attitude that shows that student's work is acceptable. When appropriate however, they must also allude to the fact that it could always be improved upon. The teacher wants to almost produce a feeling of the students' work never being good enough, while keeping them motivated to continue working toward their goal.

A big part of this is recognizing a strong work ethic rather than rewarding ability. While one student might easily write a beautiful page of prose in ten minutes another student might struggle to piece together an organized paragraph. Individual expectations should be set for each of these students, forcing them to go beyond their current level of expertise, remembering that everyone's language level, the teacher's included, could always be better.

### In conclusion...

So, there you have it. Now, when leading training or Professional Development sessions based on these three commandments, give some practice time for each or have teachers brainstorm ways to put them into action. Your students and enrollment department will definitely thank you for it!

### The Author



Brandon G. Morgan is an EFL teacher, teacher trainer, author and language lover. After a leap of faith and moving to Spain from the USA in 2011, he co-founded a language school, OELS English, that grew, in less than 5 years, to be the largest adult English language school in the northwest of Spain. Each year, he leads brand-new teachers and more than 1500 students towards success. Email: brandongmorgan@gmail.com

## Case study: a mentor's research vignettes

By Wayne Trotman, Turkey

### Introduction

Since part of my (admittedly, self-written) job description as Assistant Professor at the Professional Development Unit (PDU) at a state-run university in Turkey concerned encouraging English language teachers to investigate their working contexts, I often spoke to teachers – in groups and individually – about the possibility of my helping them set up suitably useful personal research projects. Following these semi-formal discussions some were immediately eager, and grasped the opportunity (Trotman (2015a); Trotman (2015b), while others showed varying degrees of reluctance. The latter's possible shortage of energy, inclination and research know-how was generally disguised by their catch-all comments on 'not having enough time'. With some I agreed and accepted this was almost certainly the case. For others I was more doubtful. I've always felt that most teachers are in a good position for research, at least potentially as they have at their finger-tips the means of gathering as much data as they could cope with. Getting them to gather it is another matter. This article describes my attempts to work on research projects with four colleagues, and the eventual outcomes.

### A research offer

Many reasons have been suggested as barriers to research, principally by Borg (2013: 17-18) who lists seven of them: non-collaborative school cultures; limitations in teachers' awareness, beliefs, skills and knowledge; limited resources; lack of teacher motivation; economic matters; unsupportive leadership; political issues. Another one I would add is that, however rewarding research might be, it is a lot less lucrative compared with tutoring privately with its quick cash-in-hand returns. As Borg (2013:18) aptly states: 'Economic instability for teachers is not conducive to teacher research'.

After several years of working with teachers and quite often hearing reasons (for not doing research) relating to time management, I decided to offer teachers, at least hypothetically, sufficient time. I wondered, what teachers

would choose to research if I also offered them the imaginary beneficial circumstances that tended to enable others to engage in teacher research. The outcomes of this small project may interest those working in areas such as interview analysis, teacher management, professional development, and of course teacher research. My interview questions reflect how, at the time of writing, the PDU at my university were keen to assist colleagues with setting up projects related to Exploratory Practice – (research for understanding), Allwright and Hanks (2009), or Action Research (research to understand matters prior to changing them), Burns (2005).

### Interviewee selection

I interviewed four Turkish colleagues – very much a convenience sample – who I felt might be interested in engaging in teacher-research with me if, together, we could perhaps help remove the barriers they perceived to exist. Each of the interviewees appears in this study as a particular case (Stake, 2003).

My main interview questions were as follows: If you had the time, energy and means to do so, including suitable research mentoring and supervision, which particular area of English language teaching or learning would you be interested in researching? Why would you choose this topic? Would the research involve trying only to understand what happens in your classroom by investigating an issue or a puzzle? Or would you like to carry out research in order to understand an issue or puzzle and then respond to this? How do you think you would carry out the collecting and analysing your data? What would you do with the results?

### Interview ethics

This study involved a single qualitative interview with each teacher. It also closely followed Kubanyiova's (2015: 177) ethical criteria on respect for persons, one of the three core principles she provides that serve as moral standards for research involving humans. Such respect binds the researcher to protect the well-being of and avoid potential risks to participants. Thus, all names have been changed to protect identity.

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Although some may not agree with this approach, I provided interviewees with the questions an hour prior to speaking with them. Researchers need to be aware that not all speakers of English as a second language are comfortable about responding to high-level probing, especially while being recorded. Each interview lasted approximately seven minutes, following which I sent each subject a sound file of the recording. I asked them to listen and let me know if there were any comments they had made which they might like me to delete from the transcript or simply not use in the data. I should point out that in the whole of my research career no-one has yet requested this, which indicates how trusting (or gullible) teacher interviewees perhaps are. Interviewees were later shown the vignettes I had written up. At the end of the research I agreed to delete all recordings.

### Post-interview epiphany; researcher idealism

After listening to the recordings, I realised that I was ultimately closing potential teacher-researchers down by seeming to offer them ideal circumstances and then merely listening to their responses to my questions. Their potential topics were interesting for me in terms of my own research but were, at that time at least, never to be followed up. The aim at the start of this small study was to locate and categorise topics chosen and draw interesting conclusions. With research supervision provided by myself, the obstacles to their research might actually be largely removed. This would enable them to carry out research they had initially believed could only occur in idyllic circumstances.

I should like to add how, at this point, things began to go awry. As the reader will discern from the following sections, a variety of research obstacles of my own arose. I might well have ended the project with no further comment, but decided to write it up in the event that others might either find it of interest, and even benefit from my experience.

### Case One: Yozgat – research is for others; not for me

Interview one was with Yozgat, who had received a doctorate in applied linguistics and had over twenty years ELT experience. As he was at the time an administrator, he was, as he indicated, rather busy. The interview revealed that given the right circumstances he would be interested in researching techniques for teaching vocabulary on EAP courses. His personal observations had thus far led him to believe that students had problems with constructing lexical patterns and he would be interested in designing a course for students to learn how to acquire not only the meaning of lexis but also skills for its usage. Yozgat was adamant, however, that other people could and should do this. Faced with this lack of enthusiasm I did not follow-up on how we might explore his suggestion together.

### Case Two: Newton – see you in Scotland!

Newton had been teaching English for fifteen years and was completing her doctoral studies in English literature. She explained that, as she was a specialist in the area, she would be interested in researching the use of literature to teach language. She would investigate firstly why her students rarely read anything in English, along with the actual benefits of reading for developing language skills. Her data would be gathered by questionnaire and by getting constant feedback

from her classes. She felt researching her own and others' classes, then comparing results, would enhance the research. Her aim would be to investigate how extra reading might have a positive impact on students. *"If it doesn't make a difference in the field, there is no point in doing research"*, she explained. I was unable to carry out any follow up to the above with her, as Newton won a scholarship as a Reading Fellow at a university in the UK soon after this interview.

### Case Three: Kingsley – a failed interview

Kingsley had been involved in ELT for a decade and was familiar with teacher research. She was a CELTA graduate and a colleague in the PDU. During the interview it gradually became clear that Kingsley was annoyed at how administrators were concerned with ensuring teachers were able to keep up with what she termed "the pacing" – that is, the weekly stages of the curriculum. She felt there were no explicit learning objectives in place, and no attempts to depart from the coursebook in order to take advantage of the rich extra-curricular material available. Rather than ideas for potential teacher research, her suggestions were more along the lines of curriculum design. On reflection, instead of being an interview on teacher research, my reluctance to interrupt or at least steer the interview allowed it to develop into an opportunity for Kingsley to let off steam. On reflection, the interview had taken place during Kingsley's lunch break and after a busy morning in the classroom. These were hardly ideal circumstances for a research interview.

Kingsley later moved to Ankara on a one year sabbatical and completed an MA in ELT, during which she researched EFL teachers' perceptions of output activities with reference to Swain's Output Hypothesis. We stayed in touch throughout, and I was able to assist with her quantitative data collection.

### Case Four: Yessy – now you see me, now you don't

Yessy was in her fifth year in ELT and at the time employed on a temporary basis. She explained that she would be interested in researching the integration of computer programmes in ELT. She felt from earlier experience it was useful to improve her students' autonomy *...because, she said, they take control of what they're doing while they're doing online programmes.* She added... *in a way I find it useful to question if it's effective or not.* The research would firstly be to understand but, she said, *if I find out there's action to be taken, I would.* Although her comments related to an earlier experience at site A, her potential research would be carried out in the computer lab at site B where she had recently begun, using relevant sections in students' books. As most students in site A did what she termed a *sloppy job and then went on playing games rather than doing tasks properly.* She said, *I was really curious about how to motivate them to really do the job. I would ask my students at site B how effective they find the tasks and ask them to select parts of the programme. I would gather the data through a survey or open-ended questionnaire and complete the sentences... I really want to do this.* There would be a real group and a control group. For action research she would need such groups in order to get what she termed *real scientific data.* Data for exploratory practice, she added, would be more qualitative but *...qualitative data can be*



*manipulated. She ended thus: If the institution allows me, I would like to act on the results.*

Following my personal reference in support of this, Yessy later began an MA in ELT. Ostensibly, her ideas outlined above were not possible at the university she had recently begun to work at. After several fruitful meetings during which she agreed to my suggestion to carry out research towards her dissertation on the benefits of peer observation, she suddenly stopped replying to my offers to read her work without explaining why.

## Conclusion

Instead of reading about the success of small research projects, the above notes outline the possible pitfalls involved in even the most idealistic attempts to support teachers thinking about doing research. Revealed there also is how convenience samples are not always helpful; how, geographically at least, research participants may become almost inaccessible; how even when carried out by an experienced interviewer, a research interview can go wrong. And how a case study participant can suddenly disappear without trace.

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## The Author

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# Interview



I recently had the chance to interview Alan Maley about his new edited collection *Developing expertise through experience* (2019) a British Council Teaching English Paperback

**TW:** Did you approach the British Council with the idea for this book?

**AM:** I did. I'd been browsing through some of the articles in my files and was reminded of NS Prabhu's notion of 'The Teacher's Sense of Plausibility'. It seemed that maybe the time had come to re-examine this idea.

**TW:** And what is the central idea?

**AM:** Well, essentially what Prabhu was claiming was that whatever kind of training teachers undergo, they mediate it and transform it in the light of their own experiences, values and beliefs. The idea of our book was to explore and extend this idea by asking a number of highly experienced professionals world-wide to reflect on their own trajectory of experience and the way this has influenced the kind of teachers they have become.

**TW:** What do you regard as 'expertise'?

**AM:** Being highly knowledgeable and skilled in a particular professional domain – and able to deploy this knowledge and skill in an immediately spontaneous and appropriate way when faced by unpredictable circumstances. In other words, being able to think on your feet, and respond effectively in the moment to whatever comes your way. Anyone wanting to read more about expertise could do worse than read Donald Schon's 1991 book, 'The Reflective Practitioner: How professionals think in action.' (Ashgate Publishing).

**TW:** The book is also about teachers sharing their experiences.

**AM:** My own experience has shown me that I have learned at least as much, if not more, from colleagues as I have from formal education or training. Surely, the very existence of teachers' associations like IATEFL is predicated on the value of sharing information, ideas, perceptions and skills with other teachers? Indeed, one of the hopes we have for this book is that it will stimulate and highlight the value of sharing based on personal experience.

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**TW:** Can you tell us a little about Mr Prabhu?

**AM:** *I interviewed Prabhu a few years back for The Teacher Trainer journal. (Volume 3 Number 3 pp28-30 1989) That gave some idea of who he is.*

*N.S. Prabhu is principally recognised as the godfather of Task Based Learning. The Bangalore Project on which he worked was based on the belief that linguistic syllabuses were next to useless in helping students learn a foreign language. Instead, Prabhu designed a set of problem-solving tasks as part of what he called a Procedural Syllabus. He claimed that, while focussing on solving a problem in the foreign language and through interactive discussion, the learner would sub-consciously acquire the language necessary for the solving of the task. His project, which ran in a number of schools in South India, including Bangalore, was set up to test this idea. You can read about the project in detail in his 'Second Language Pedagogy'. (OUP, 1987).*

*But Prabhu was, and still is, a highly creative and often iconoclastic thinker about many issues concerning how languages are taught and learnt. His Plausibility idea is only one of many insightful notions he has put forward over a long career. It is timely that his updated collected papers have just been published by Orient Black Swan in Chennai under the title 'Perceptions of Language Pedagogy' (2019).*

*Prabhu has not been one to promote himself as energetically as many of his applied-linguistic colleagues, and his name is less well-known than theirs. But he has undoubtedly had a highly significant and original influence on thinking about our field. He deserves more attention than he has received. Perhaps his new book will help to remedy this neglect.*

**TW:** How did you go about getting contributors for the British Council edited collection?

**AM:** *That's a complicated question. First of all, I drew up my own hit-list of names on the basis of my own familiarity with people's work. I had in mind the need to ensure that the 20 names chosen should be broadly representative in terms of geographical spread, gender, NS/NNS, types of teaching context, etc. In consultation with the British Council, I then tweaked my own list to accommodate some of their suggestions.*

**TW:** What is the basic structure of most of the chapters?

**AM:** *Well, I asked contributors, as far as possible, to reflect on their early educational (especially linguistic) experiences and how these had influenced later development. I also asked them to discuss the places, job positions, ideas, books and people which had helped form their enduring attitudes, beliefs and practices as mature professionals. But human nature being what it is, not everyone complied with this format, though essentially, they covered much the same ground.*

**TW:** What about the key ideas emerging?

**AM:** *There is too much to answer that in detail here. Anyone interested can check my Introduction to the book, which lists most of the key ideas that emerged. But they were all in line with the value of experience as a touchstone for personal and professional development.*

**TW:** Do the chapters have any bearing on pre-set or inset teacher training or teacher development?

**AM:** *I very much believe that they do. In fact, one of the conclusions I draw from the contributions of these 20 professionals is that the current concentration on the technical aspects of teacher knowledge and skills in training programmes is causing an imbalance in the way we prepare teachers. Of course, teachers in training and in continuing development cannot do without a core of knowledge and skills. But this alone, while necessary, is not sufficient. We need to draw on the accumulated experience of teachers in the concrete circumstances of classrooms to inform discussion and debate in the programmes we offer. In short, how can we help teachers acquire the 'expertise' I described above? That should be centre stage, not pushed to the periphery.*

*I should mention that the book is accompanied by a web-file containing suggested Continuing Professional Development activities for implementing the element of personal experience into training and development programmes.*

## Alan Maley

Alan's career in English Language Teaching began with The British Council in 1962. After post-graduate training at the University of Leeds, he worked for the British Council in Yugoslavia, Ghana, Italy, France, PR China and India over a period of 26 years. After resigning from the Council in 1988, he became Director-General of the Bell Educational Trust in Cambridge (1988-93). He then took up the post of Senior Fellow in the Department of English, National University of Singapore, where he stayed for 5 years. His last full-time post was as Dean and Professor of the Institute for English



Language Education, Assumption University, Bangkok, where he set up new MA programmes. Since retiring from Assumption in 2004, he has occupied a number of visiting professorial posts at Leeds Metropolitan, Nottingham, Durham, Malaysia (UKM), Vietnam (OU-HCMC) and Germany (Universitat Augsburg).

He has published extensively and was series editor for the Oxford Resource Books for Teachers for over 20 years. He continues to write for publication. He also remains active as a speaker at national and international conferences.

He was a co-founder of The Extensive Reading Foundation, and of The C group: Creativity for Change in Language Education ([www.thecreativitygroupweebly.com](http://www.thecreativitygroupweebly.com)). He is a past-President of IATEFL and was given the ELTons Lifetime Achievement Award in 2012. Email: [yelamoo@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:yelamoo@yahoo.co.uk)

### Web-links for the book

<https://englishagenda.britishcouncil.org/continuing-professional-development/teacher-educator-framework/taking-responsibility-own-professional-development/developing-expertise-through-experience>

<https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/developing-expertise-through-experience>

# Article Watch

Below are brief summaries of relevant articles from other journals. In some bibliographic entries publishers' new coding of page numbers is given in boxes.

**ELTJ, 74/1, Jan 2020, pp. 40–48.**  
<https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/ccz044>

- **'Student teachers' perceptions of critical thinking and its teaching'.** By Rui Yuan, Paul Stapleton.

Although the importance of critical thinking (CT) has been stressed in English language education, little attention has been paid to language teachers' perceptions and experiences regarding CT during the pre-service stage of their careers. Drawing on data from a focus group and follow-up email interviews with pre-service language teachers, this study shows that the participants had a limited understanding of CT, and lacked preparation and support in their programmes regarding how to implement CT-oriented teaching practices. The findings also revealed a range of individual and contextual challenges faced by the participants when they tried to integrate CT into their language teaching. The study concludes with recommendations on how to cultivate a critical mindset among language teachers while developing CT-oriented pedagogies.

**ETp (English Teaching Professional).**  
[www.etprofessional.com](http://www.etprofessional.com)

- **Issue 126, Jan 2020, pp. 44–45.** 'Which comes first?' By Simon Brown.

This article contains a plea to trainers in Cambridge CELTA contexts to be more flexible in input sessions on lesson planning and when grading lessons where plans are not fully realised, so that trainees are encouraged to show flexibility in the plan and in its (possibly partial) execution.

- **Issue 127, March 2020, p. 62, 'Five things you always wanted to know about mobile phones and distraction (but were too afraid to ask)'.** By Nicky Hockly.

Another useful article in the Author's series. This one answers the questions: Why are students so distracted by their mobile phones? Should I just take them away at the beginning of class? How can I combat the distractions? Useful suggestions are given.

**MET (Modern English Teacher) Jan 2020, vol. 29/1, pp. 44–46.**  
[www.onlinemet.com](http://www.onlinemet.com)

- **'Entrepreneurship education in ELT'.** By Daniel Xerri.

After defining entrepreneurship in terms of economics and education, the author suggests that cultivating entrepreneurship education will encourage innovation and value creation, and thus boost the success and growth of an organisation by equipping its people cooperatively to question the status quo, identify new opportunities, enhance the qualifications and range of its services, and serve its clients better.

- **April 2020, vol. 29/2, pp. 67–69** 'Being the new Director of Studies – Part one'. By Matthew Hallett

This article describes some of the trials and tribulations of beginning a new management role.

**Language Teaching Research, 24/1. January 2020. Special Issue: Reframing the Knowledge-base of Language Teacher Education.**

<https://journals.sagepub.com/toc/ltra/24/1>. Guest Editors: Donald Freeman, Karen E. Johnson, & Megan Madigan Peercy.

This issue includes the following articles all of relevance to readers of this journal.

- 'Arguing for a knowledge-base in language teacher education, then (1998) and now (2018)'. By Donald Freeman'
- 'The knowledge base for language teaching: What is the English to be taught as content?'. By Mary J. Schleppegrell.
- 'Academic English as standard language ideology: A renewed research agenda for asset-based language education'. By Jeff MacSwan.



- 'The "subject" of Freeman & Johnson's reconceived knowledge base of second language teacher education'. By Russell Cross.
- 'The world of English language teaching: Creating equity or inequity?'. By Denise E. Murray.
- 'Remapping the teacher knowledge-base of language teacher education: A Vietnamese perspective'. By Le Van Canh.
- 'Reframing the space between: Teachers and learners in context'. By Annela Teemant.
- 'Reframing teaching knowledge in Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL): A European perspective'. By Lucilla Lopriore.
- 'Missing a S-STEP? How self-study of teacher education practice can support the language teacher education knowledge base'. By Megan Madigan Peercy & Judy Sharkey
- 'Informing and transforming language teacher education pedagogy'. Karen E. Johnson & Paula R. Golombek.

**Professional Development in Education. Published online, 46/1 Feb 2020.**

<https://doi.org/10.1080/19415257.2020.1725597>

- **'Teachers' perceptions of professionalism: a top-down or a bottom-up decision-making process?'** By Farzaneh Dehghan

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Abstract: "This study aims at investigating how a group of state school teachers in Iran perceived professionalism in their career. The study draws on the two senses of the concept of professionalism: independent or transformative professionalism (bottom-up) versus managerial or prescribed professionalism (top-down). For this purpose, a checklist was developed based on these different senses to probe 85 language teachers' perceptions of the different aspects of professionalism based on several interviews with teachers selected purposefully for this study. The results showed the majority of the participants regarded professionalism as a top-down process depending on the extent to which society, culture, ministry of education and even school administration define, support and provide for being professional in their career.

Moreover, the comparison of the results of the two groups of the participants, i.e. those who were teaching at both state and private schools and those who just taught at state school (chi-square) showed a significant difference between the two groups in the sense that just-state school teachers considered themselves as much more limited in gaining the second sense of professionalism due to their teaching experiences in the past which had considerably influenced their future goals, developments and directions."

**Teaching and Teacher Education, 91, May 2020, article 103047.**

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0742051X19306304>

- 'Student teachers' responses to critical mentor feedback: A study of face-saving strategies in teaching placements'. By Cato R.P. Bjørndal.

Abstract: 'Despite much research on feedback in teaching placement, there is a limited number of interaction studies. Moreover, how student teachers respond to critical mentor feedback remains quite unmapped. This article aims to explore this interactional aspect through the analysis of 12 post-observation sessions. Critical feedback sequences are analysed by face-work theory (Goffman, 1967). Findings suggest that student teachers are deeply concerned about saving face when receiving critical feedback. Their strategies include "contradicting", "withdrawing", and "repairing" face, in addition to "emphasising a self-reflective and progressive face" .....

## 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.

**Learning through a Lens: It's all about photography.** J. Hewitt. (2014). Independent Thinking Press. ISBN 978-178135114-7, 217pp; A4, sideways. This book, for teachers of all subjects, shows how to exploit an interest that pupils will take to naturally, in order to promote three ways of learning; 'How to...', 'About...' and 'Learning through...'. Now that most students have a camera on their phone, why not use them?

**The Expert Teacher: Using pedagogical content knowledge to plan superb lessons.** D Mead. (2019). Crown house. ISBN 978-178135311-0, 319pp+. The main parts of this book are: How is your subject learned? & Expert teaching & learning. We have some doubts that the term 'pedagogical content knowledge' is a useful addition to the terminology of teacher education. Even so, this book could be useful extra reading with respect to CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning).

**Powering up Students: The learning power approach to high school teaching.** G. Claxton. (2019). Crown House. ISBN 978-178583338-0, 356pp+. The goal of the 'learning power approach' is: 'to develop all students as confident and capable learners – ready, willing, and able to choose, design, research, pursue, troubleshoot, and evaluate learning for themselves, alone and with others, in school and out, for grades and for life" (p. 10).



**Critical Thinking Skills: Developing effective analysis and argument, 2nd edition.** S. Cottrell. (2011). Palgrave Macmillan. ISBN 978-0-23028529-3, 282pp+. A book we missed when it came out. There is a 16-page introduction plus chapters on: Basics such as focusing attention; Identifying arguments (two chapters); Clarity, consistency, & structure; Recognizing assumptions & implicit arguments;

Identifying flaws in an argument; Finding & evaluating sources of evidence; Critical processing of materials; Critical thinking when writing; Evaluating critical writing; Critical reflection. There are diverse practice activities plus associated texts. For adults; not specifically for language learners. Recommended.

**Bringing Online Video into the Classroom.** J Keddle. (2014). P. ISBN 978-0-19-442156-0, 160 pp, ca. A4. We missed this excellent resource when it first came out. One might expect some of the videos to be hard to obtain now but what really counts about this book is the multitude of great ideas that it presents.

**Supporting the Well Being of Girls: An evidence-based school programme.** T Rae & E Piggott (2014). Routledge. ISBN 978-1-13801526-5, 208pp+, A4. Written for teachers, psychologists, youth workers and learning mentors with respect to upper primary and secondary school, this book presents instructions, rationales, and materials for 16 sessions for students. Part of the background for the preparation of the book is growing concern regarding the difficulties encountered by white working-class girls (a particularly vulnerable group in British schools) "in today's increasingly complex and sexualized society" (p. xiv). The sessions are: Introduction, Self-esteem, Body image & appearance, Stereotypes (2 sessions), Bullying, Mental health, Anxiety & depression, Stress, Self-harm (2 sessions), Using therapeutic tools from cognitive behavioural therapy, Parenting, Healthy living, and Looking forward/Evaluation. Topics were trialed in focus groups. Both authors are educational psychologists. Extra materials include: separate information sheets for students & for parents/carers;

a letter to parents/carers; information about referrals to specialist agencies. An important source of information and ideas about what to do.

**Words that Go 'Ping': The ridiculously wonderful world of onomatopoeia.** B Lasserre (2018). Allen & Unwin. ISBN 978-1-76063-219-9, 197pp, small hardback. A light, informal look at examples of 'sound symbolism' (more exactly, phonological iconicity) in various languages of the world.

**Serious Fun: Practical Strategies to Motivate and Engage Students.** C Hirst-Loucks & K Loucks. (2014). Routledge. ISBN 978-1-596-67253-6, 168pp+. The authors set out a rationale for fun activities in a useful 41 page introduction. There are some references to the USA school system. Not specifically about language teaching. About 90 activities are described under these headings: Getting ready to learn; Class- & Team-building; Strategies for processing content; Movement; Closure; Content-specific activities. If you want to go beyond the fun activities you've come across in EFL books, there may be something new for you here.


**Teach Like You Imagined It: Finding the right balance.** K Lister. (2019). Crown House. ISBN 978-178583400-4, 166pp+. Covers lesson planning, behaviour management, marking, and continuous professional development. A key theme is how to cope better in a demanding job by finding practicable ways to make efficient use of time and reserves of mental stamina.

**Learning without Fear: A practical toolkit for developing growth mindset in the early years and primary classroom.** J Stead & R Sabharwal (2019). Crown House. ISBN 978-1785833052-, 260pp+. Chapters cover, e.g., Learning environment &

displays; Self-regulation & autonomy; Higher order thinking; The ability myth; Feedback, marking & praise; Gauging the impact of your teaching; Engaging parents; plus outlines of 40 'lesson ideas'. Looks useful. Not language learning specific.

**Fairness, Justice, and Language Assessment.** T McNamara, U Knoch, & J Fan. (2019). Oxford University Press. ISBN 978-0-19-401708-4, 215pp. This is an interesting book about important matters that tend to be glossed over in most of the books on testing that language teachers (and maybe teacher trainers) are likely to have read. It is surprising that the title (and there is no subtitle) indicates so vaguely what these matters might be. In fact, a major topic inside is a type of statistical analysis known as Rasch modeling, which the authors try valiantly to introduce in terms that mathphobes might understand. In bending over backwards to avoid mathematical notation, they have here and there made their explanations harder to follow than if they had assumed that readers will have a rudimentary acquaintance with algebra. For example, on page 34 the authors state that "logits express the probability, or odds, of success". This suggests that the probability ( $P$ ) of  $X$  and odds in favor of  $X$  are the same thing, whereas  $Odds = P / (1 - P)$ . Moreover, a logit is neither the same as a probability nor the same as an odds. As it is, readers who haven't taken an introductory course in statistics are likely to be left wondering just what is meant by important terms such as *odds*, *logit*, *standard deviation*, and *standard error*. Nevertheless, we can recommend this book to anyone who wants to learn in detail what organizations do with the data they get from their tests (e.g., TOEFL and IELTS).

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## Humanising Language Teaching

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**Focus on Vocabulary Learning.** *M Horst. (2019). Oxford U Press. ISBN 978-0-19-400313-1, 173 pp+.* As befits a book in the publisher's 'Key Concepts' series, the authors cover the overall topic readably, knowledgeably, and concisely. There are no pictures or graphs. Coverage is of course not comprehensive, but it is up to date. The main parts are: Vocabulary knowledge & learning goals; Learning vocabulary; Vocabulary acquisition (VA) in young learners of English; VA in adolescent learners of English; Vocabulary: What we know now. There are suggestions for further reading and, interspersed throughout the book, a dozen or so activities for readers to engage in.

**Essential Truths for Teachers.** *D Steele & T Whitaker. (2019). Routledge. ISBN 978-0-367-07679-5, 99pp+; nearly pocket-size.* In 56 short chapters the authors impart a great deal of very useful practical advice. Some examples: 'When a student is misbehaving the teacher needs to make sure the student is the only one misbehaving' (i.e., check that the other one is not you!); 'The most memorable lessons usually do not involve a textbook'; 'Not all your students have hope. ...And when this fact hits you realize that your job is bigger than any lesson plan or standardized test'. Highly recommended for pre-service teachers particularly. Exceptionally reader-friendly print and text layout.

**75 Ways to Be a Better Teacher Tomorrow: With less stress and quick success.** *A Breaux & T Whitaker. (2019). Routledge. ISBN 978-1-138-36338-0, 151pp+; nearly pocket-size.* A compendium of exhortations, each one occupying about 1½ pages. Here are some representative tips: Swallow your negative words; Never miss a birthday; Invite an administrator to your

room; Say three nice things to the student who aggravates you most; Greet every student everyday; Display a teacher's creed; Be the most professional teacher in the school; Compliment the custodian (= janitor). In the same series as the title just above this one.

**The Principled Communicative Approach: Seven Criteria for Success.** *J. Arnold, Z. Dörnyei, & C. Pugliese. (2015). Helbling Languages. ISBN 978-3-85272-938-1, 148pp, A4.* From the introduction we learn that the content reflects the authors' belief that the communicative approach to teaching an additional language "could do with some revitalisation in order to make it more fitting for the 21st century" and to take account of recent developments in psycholinguistics and applied linguistics (p. 5). The seven criteria referred to in the subtitle (which are called 'principles' in the book itself) have to do with personal significance, automatization of language production (for optimal fluency), skill learning through controlled practice, an optimal balance in attention to meaning and form (since meaningful production depends on entrenched, accessible knowledge of linguistic forms), attention to multiword items of vocabulary, exposure to large amounts of L2 input, and "ample opportunities to participate in genuine L2 interaction" (p. 10). Each principle has a chapter. Ample references and pointers to further reading.

### Available online

**Creating an inclusive school environment,** edited by Susan Douglas. (2019) British Council, ISBN: 978-0-86355-933-4. Online pdf: [https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/sites/teacheng/files/J157\\_Creating%20an%20inclusive%20school%20environment%20report\\_FINAL\\_web.pdf](https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/sites/teacheng/files/J157_Creating%20an%20inclusive%20school%20environment%20report_FINAL_web.pdf)

As stated on the website (<https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/creating-inclusive-school-environment>):

'In this publication we have drawn together research and learning from around the world, to highlight the need for inclusive education and some of the steps being taken to implement it. The settings brought to life here reveal the work of teachers, leaders and policy makers in geographically and culturally diverse situations. In each of the chapters we see the challenges they face and the significant efforts they make to ensure access to, and engagement with, a quality education for all children. The collection includes 15 case studies, showing how:

- teachers can provide positive role models and introduce activities and topics to promote inclusion.
- teacher educators can provide support and introduce skills and knowledge to improve teachers' capacity to discuss diversity and employ inclusive approaches to teaching and learning.
- government institutions and charities can work together to improve access and engagement in schools and create safer environments for learning, even in the most challenging contexts.

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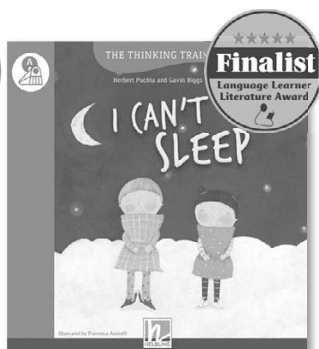
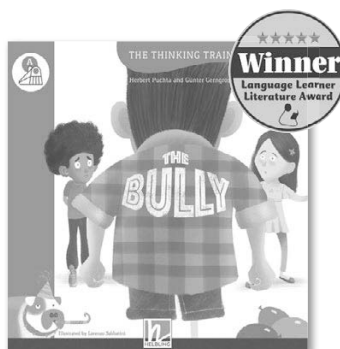


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